

Material Conceptualisms: Philippine Art under Authoritarianism, 1968–1986

by

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DEDICATION

For my family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To be Added

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ABSTRACT

More than half of all presidential issuances between Ferdinand Marcos' declaration of martial law in 1972 and his deposition in 1986 had immediate bearing on the relationship between the arts and the state in the Philippines. Declaration of martial law resulted in the elimination of independent press, the limitation of assembly and movement due to strict curfews, and covert junctures of violence and secret assassinations. Yet, coinciding with over a decade of coercion, control, and suppression was a flourishing art scene that developed within the walls of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), a concrete edifice constructed largely to fulfill Imelda Marcos' political and personal commitment to the arts and cultural diplomacy. Whereas prior scholarship has focused on the CCP as an icon of the Marcoses' patronage and an architectural symbol of the conjugal dictatorship's thirst for power, insufficient attention has been given to the artworks inside. Conceptual artists who frequently exhibited in the CCP have been understudied due to their affiliation with one of the most violent dictatorships in recent Philippine history. Though artists who exhibited at the state-supported CCP were later censured due to their presumed elitism and collusion with the Marcos dictatorship, the dissertation examines how art performed or displayed at the CCP was not beholden to the ideology of the institution.

Material Conceptualisms: Philippine Art under Authoritarianism, 1968–1986 examines conceptual art as a broad aesthetic category that offered a new field of action in the Philippines under Ferdinand and Imelda Marcoses' dictatorial control through four case studies: Jose

Maceda, Roberto Chabet, artist collective Shop 6, and Luis “Junyee” Yee, Jr. While works by these artists were dismissed as complicit with the regime and too formalist or illegible to the local Philippine people, I counter that overt dissension would have further justified the Marcoses’ need for consolidated power. Thus, in lieu of open resistance, conceptualism’s ambivalent form provides a model of how refusal could operate under surveillance by instead challenging sensorial experiences specific to the Marcoses’ technological and socio-political concerns. Combining textual analysis of artist interviews, archival documents, artist essays, and art criticism with sustained formal analysis of conceptual performances, installations, and objects, the dissertation reveals how these seemingly politically innocuous artworks by Maceda, Chabet, Shop 6, and Junyee propose everyday resistance as an unstable force that manifests in elastic and uncertain forms.

INTRODUCTION

[fig. 0.1] In a photograph taken at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) in 1979, a woman stands on top of a set of corrugated metal sheets nestled in an alcove within the CCP Main Gallery. The metal sheets have been arranged at a moderate incline reminiscent of a rooftop, which also serves as the title of the work—*Bubong* (Roof). Canned lights attached to the ceiling illuminate *Bubong* like a stage and reveal the woman's mirthful expression. She smiles as she stands towards the top of the installation, her feet angled towards a corner of the alcove to maintain her balance on the sloped surface. Though *Bubong* fails to operate as an efficient covering or shelter, it effortlessly supported the weight of the woman—an inversion of a roof's routine function. Two more women circle in front of *Bubong*. The woman on the far right of the photograph looks down at the edge of the rusty rooftop while she moves towards it, as if she, too, is about to test the stability of the haphazard construction under her stacked heels.

Bubong is a work by Joe Bautista installed at *Five Contemporary Sculptors* at the CCP in 1979. As indicated by its straightforward title, the exhibition included works by five contemporary sculptors in the Philippines: Napoleon V. Abueva, Ed Castrillo, Allan Cosio, Ginny Dandan, and Bautista. Despite the description of these artists as “sculptor” and thus their artwork as “sculpture,” notes for the exhibition identify Bautista as an artist who “creates situations.”¹ Instead of the conventional placement of sculpture on a pedestal, *Bubong* appears

¹ Notes for *Five Contemporary Sculptors*, Museum Documentation, Main Gallery, Vol. I, 1979, Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

built into the alcove, as if it were an architectural attachment rather than a free-standing object. The press announcement for the exhibition notes that *Bubong* “seems to have come straight from someone’s house.”² Art critic Leonidas Benesa, one of Fernando Zobel’s star pupils in art criticism from Ateneo de Manila University, described the work displayed at *Five Contemporary Sculptors* as “situational sculpture.”³ Benesa explained, “That is to say, the work being exhibited is not to be considered as something within a vacuum, but part of the entire ambiance, the surrounding, *in situ*. And the work is most successful if the spectator himself or herself is able to participate in the ‘concept’ or ‘experience’ of the artist-situationist.”⁴ The three spectators in the abovementioned photograph appear to do exactly that—participate and find pleasure in Bautista’s work as they experience the rooftop structure from a vantage point usually unavailable to women in high heels and flowing skirts.

According to Bautista, however, *Bubong*’s installation in the CCP Main Gallery was short-lived. In an interview from the 1990s, Bautista recalled a conversation between First Lady Imelda Marcos and Lucrecia Kasilag, then president of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, that occurred upon Imelda’s viewing *Bubong*. He divulged that First Lady proclaimed, “This is not supposed to be here. We don’t have slums here. We are a developing country and I am promoting the Philippines. We don’t have slums here.”⁵ Bautista then denied in the interview that his rooftop installation had anything to do with slums, stating, “I wanted the viewer to experience...how it is to be on top of a roof. That is what I saw, rusty rooftops....I didn’t associate

² Press Announcement for *Five Contemporary Sculptors*, Museum Documentation, Main Gallery, Vol. I, 1979, Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

³ Leonidas V. Benesa, “Situational Sculpture at CCP,” *Philippines Daily Express*, April 27, 1979, 27.

⁴ Benesa, “Situational Sculpture,” 27.

⁵ Joe Bautista Interview with Francesca Enriquez, circa 1990s, Shop 6 File, Chabet Archive, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong.

it with squatters.”⁶ Despite these objections, Bautista remarked that *Bubong* was taken down shortly after the incident, stating “I was even wondering why they had it removed...this is not rebellion—why, this is even relaxed, playful....A lot of people, wearing high heels, would actually go up.”⁷ Bautista also observed that during “that time of the exhibition there was a convention going on—MIFF (Manila International Film Festival) maybe,” suggesting that the presence of a large international delegation near the CCP might have further solidified Imelda’s insistence to erase the semblance of slums from the exhibition.⁸

I begin with an extended discussion of *Bubong* because the work and its reception synthesizes many of the important themes or recurring tropes that appear throughout my dissertation, such as the participant role of the spectator, inefficient or un-functional employment of everyday and found materials that engage with its surroundings, and the fluidity of rebellion or perception of it. Bautista’s insistence that his work was “not rebellion” but “playful” exemplified how many artists under the Marcoses deflected accusations of impropriety or unseemliness as *joke lang* [only joking!]. The anecdote also prominently features representation from dominant players in discussing Philippine art from the 1970s: the artist, the spectator, the critic, and the autocratic State in the form of then First Lady Imelda Marcos, who took control of nearly everything arts related under the Marcos administration, and the CCP, the first of her many buildings dedicated to the development of an arts infrastructure in the Philippines.

By beginning with a description of a photograph rather than of *Bubong* itself, I also wish to draw attention to two other important participants in this history—the photographer who

⁶ Joe Bautista Interview with Francesca Enriquez, circa 1990s.

⁷ Joe Bautista Interview with Francesca Enriquez, circa 1990s.

⁸ Ibid. The First Manila International Film Festival (MIFF) did not take place until 1982, the same year that the Manila Film Center was completed, so the international event could not have been MIFF in 1979.

documents the artwork and the contemporary viewer, myself included, who must analyze many of these ephemeral objects and installations through second-hand accounts and fallible memories of those present through the 1970s and 80s. Bautista's mistaken recollection that *Bubong* was removed due an international audience that would have been in attendance at the Manila International Film Festival—an event that had yet to begin in 1979—subtly points towards the apprehension artists in the Philippines felt about art's instrumentalization for diplomatic and economic ends during the period.

Material Conceptualisms: Philippine Art under Authoritarianism, 1968–1986 examines conceptual art as a broad aesthetic category that offered a new field of action in the Philippines under Ferdinand and Imelda Marcoses' dictatorial control through four case studies: Jose Maceda, Roberto Chabet, artist collective Shop 6, and Luis "Junyee" Yee, Jr. During his presidency from 1965 to 1986, Marcos imposed martial law in the Philippines from 1972 to 1981 under the guise of suppressing communist takeover and civil disobedience.⁹ Declaration of martial law resulted in the elimination of independent press, the limitation of assembly and movement due to strict curfews, and covert junctures of violence and secret assassinations.¹⁰ Coinciding with over a decade of coercion, control and suppression, however, was a flourishing art scene—one that included "situational sculpture" like *Bubong*—which developed within the walls of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, a gargantuan concrete structure constructed

⁹ James Hamilton-Paterson, *America's Boy: A Century of Colonialism in the Philippines* (New York: Henry Holt & Company LLC, 1998), 280.

¹⁰ See Vincent Boudreau, "Chapter 6: The Philippine new society and state repression." *Resisting Dictatorship: Repression and Protest in Southeast Asia*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2004: 134-151; Richard J. Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989); Mark Thompson, *The Anti-Marcos Struggle: Personalistic Rule and Democratic Transition in the Philippines* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995); Robert L. Youngblood, *Marcos Against the Church: Economic Development and Political Repression in the Philippines* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990) and James Hamilton-Paterson, *America's Boy* for in-depth discussion of repression under Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos during martial law.

largely due to Imelda Marcos's political and personal interest in the arts and cultural diplomacy.¹¹ Combining textual analysis of artist interviews, archival documents, and art criticism with sustained formal analysis of conceptual performances, installations, and objects, I argue that conceptual art—a term I will clarify further in the introduction—presented novel ways to challenge Ferdinand and Imelda Marcoses' authoritarianism through visual, aural, and tactile acts that compromised the administration's sociopolitical ideals.

Art and Politics under Marcos

According to an unpublished report by Cherubim Quizon, more than half of all presidential issuances from Marcos' imposition of martial law in 1972 to his deposition in 1986 had immediate bearing on the relationship between the arts and the state in the Philippines.¹² This included the establishment and implementation of the National Artists Award, the International Artist Award, the Philippine High School for the Arts in Mt. Makiling, and nationwide contests such as the National Music Competitions for Youth Artists.¹³ The significant amount of attention given to the arts by the Marcos administration undoubtedly occurred because of First Lady Imelda Marcos, whose "numerous attempts to spread beauty and culture," as historian Vicente Rafael claims, were "logical extensions of Ferdinand's attempts to leave traces

¹¹ Pearlie Rose Salaveria Baluyut, *Institutions and Icons of Patronage: Arts and Culture in the Philippines during the Marcos Years, 1965-1986* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2012), 34-5; Purita Kalaw-Ledesma and Amadis Ma. Guerrero, *The Struggle for Philippine Art* (Manila: Vera-Reyes, 1974), 124-125.

¹² Cherubim Quizon, "Changing Orientations of Government Policy in the Arts," unpublished paper, 11-12, from Pearlie Rose Salaveria Baluyut, *Institutions and Icons of Patronage: Arts and Culture in the Philippines during the Marcos Years, 1965-1986* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2012), 26.

¹³ Baluyut, *Institutions and Icons*, 26-28.

of his power everywhere.”¹⁴ Imelda played a key role in “projecting an international image for the Philippines” as she turned “state power into a series of spectacles, such as cultural centers, film festivals, historically themed parks, five-star hotels, and glitzy international conferences.”¹⁵ The First Lady, formerly crowned Miss Manila, was known for her great beauty and formidable charm, assets that would help her secure foreign funds to develop an arts infrastructure in the Philippines.¹⁶

In *Edifice Complex*, Gerard Lico criticizes the Marcoses’ interest in developing infrastructure for the arts as a self-interested one aligned with their political ambitions of progress and internationalism. He writes:

To showcase the myth of modern progress under martial law, the Marcos regime never ceased to scout for every opportunity to host international events. For the first couple, hosting meant achieving media coverage, a chance to promote the Philippines globally, in order to gain acceptance. The promotion of urban image is of particular importance. ...What better way to sell a progressive image of Manila and simultaneously usher in a new era in the life of the nation than through distinctive modern architecture and leading-edge infrastructure programs? And of course, the modernization scheme and the spectacle

¹⁴ Vicente Rafael, “Patronage, Pornography and Youth: Ideology and Spectatorship during the Early Marcos Years,” in *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 137.

¹⁵ Rafael, “Patronage, Pornography and Youth,” 134, 138.

¹⁶ That Imelda’s beauty served as a “secret weapon” in the Marcos’ administration was no secret. In a speech criticizing Imelda’s involvement with the CCP, Senator Ninoy Aquino stated, “Imelda Marcos is the most potent secret weapon in the arsenal of Ferdinand Marcos.... I think she is a thing of beauty, a joy forever. I said that no amount of effort could de-glamourize Imelda. I consider her the prettiest Filipina of our generation.... But a president should not use his wife for politics.... She is a lovely woman but I think politics should not be for women.” In Quijano de Manila, “Parthenon or Pantheon: The First Lady Answers the Blast on the Cultural Center by Senator Aquino,” *Philippines Free Press*, 72. Ironically, Aquino’s wife, Corazon “Cory” Aquino, would eventually become the first female president of the Philippines in 1986. For more on Imelda, see Katherine Ellison, *Imelda: Steel Butterfly of the Philippines* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988).

of urban modernity would be incomplete without its emphasis on the finest details of art and culture.¹⁷

Imelda sought artistic internationalism through inversion of its previous terms—the import of foreign actors and agents into the Philippines to establish it as an international center rather than the export of local artists to foreign exhibitions. Art and infrastructure for the arts played an immensely important role in presenting the Philippines as a progressive nation worthy of international patronage under the Marcos administration. On the other hand, the regime’s support for the arts helped to fund an experimental art scene that took pleasure in making works centered on decay, abjection, and disorder—all the things that contradicted Imelda’s “urban beautification” efforts, which included “cleaning up the squatter community eyesores.”¹⁸

During her campaign efforts for Marcos in September, 1965, Imelda remarked that one of her projects, in addition to a social welfare program, would be “the construction of a cultural center for the development of the Filipino soul, which...is just as essential to nation-building.”¹⁹ After her husband took office, Imelda immediately set about fundraising for her first of many architectural projects meant to house culture and the arts in the Philippines. **[fig. 0.2]** The first of these projects was a theater of performing arts called the Cultural Center of the Philippines, often shortened as either the Center or the CCP in publications from the period.

President Marcos formally established the CCP through declaration of Executive Order No. 30 in 1966. The order specified that the Cultural Center be conceived “to awaken the

¹⁷ Gerard Lico, *Edifice Complex: Power, Myth, and Marcos State Architecture* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003), 144.

¹⁸ Youngblood, *Marcos Against the Church*, 112.

¹⁹ Pedro R. Nervasa, “The Cultural Center of the Philippines – Asia’s Mecca of the Arts,” *Business Chronicle*, May 31, 1970, 14.

consciousness of our people to our cultural heritage, and...to cultivate and enhance public interest in, and appreciation of, distinctive Philippine arts.”²⁰ It further acknowledged the role of the state in cultural affairs, stating, “The preservation and promotion of Philippine culture in all its varied aspects and phases is a vital concern of the State.”²¹ Imelda commissioned Filipino architect Leandro V. Locsin—the well-decorated architect who drew up the initial plans for the Philippine-American Cultural Foundation theater—to design the CCP, which officially opened in 1969 on Roxas Boulevard against the scenic backdrop of Manila Bay.

According columnist Quijano de Manila in the *Philippine Free Press*, Imelda remarked that, in order to raise funds for the Center, she and Ferdinand “took advantage...of our birthday and wedding anniversaries for the advantage of the country. This person would give P100,000 and that one P50,000.”²² The article further documented that Imelda took it upon herself to welcome wealthy foreigners. She said, “I would go out of my way to meet them at the airport, lunch with them, interest them in my project. It is a tiring job—but they leave large donations to the Center.”²³ A sizeable donation, initially earmarked for an earlier theater for performing arts, also came from the Philippine-American Cultural Foundation.²⁴ Another substantial donation came after a state visit to the United States in 1966, in which “Mrs. Marcos was able to interest

²⁰ Exec. Order. No. 30, Malacañang Records Office (1966), *reprinted in Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines*, <http://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1966/06/25/executive-order-no-30-s-1966/> (Accessed 4 Jan 2018).

²¹ Exec. Order. No. 30.

²² de Manila, “Parthenon or Pantheon,” 3.

²³ de Manila, “Parthenon or Pantheon,” 3.

²⁴ Pedro R. Nervasa, “Asia’s Mecca of the Arts,” 14-16. In the article, Nervasa notes that in 1957, the U.S. and the Philippine government had commissioned architect Leandro V. Locsin to design a theater for performing arts at a site in Quezon City. The “whole thing was scrapped” due to “a disagreement with the U.S. embassy on how to continue the project” and the Philippine-American Cultural, represented by Dr. Vidal Tan, reallocated funds for Imelda’s new Cultural Center plans.

President Johnson to provide U.S. support for the Center.”²⁵ This resulted in a passage of a \$28-million Special Fund for Education that allotted \$3.5 million to the CCP.²⁶ Other foreign donations for the CCP came from a Japanese philanthropist, who donated 20,000 bags of cement, and the Eltra Corporation of New York, which contributed a P\$1-million printing press to create educational and cultural materials for the CCP.²⁷ As part of the her arduous fundraising efforts, Imelda remarked, referring to the copious amounts of openings she attended to bring attention to her project, “I almost broke my back cutting ribbons.”²⁸

Following the People’s Power Revolution and the subsequent fall of the Marcoses’ regime in 1986, artists who exhibited at the state-sponsored CCP were censured due to their affiliation with the conjugal dictatorship.²⁹ Ahmad Mashadi contends that the CCP’s “links to the Marcos regime and the apparent exclusion of artists identified with the political opposition compelled many to view the CCP as merely a cultural extension of Marcos’s rule.”³⁰ The CCP as a “cultural extension,” he suggests, supported abstraction that aligned with the Marcoses’ desire to project an international and progressive image of the Philippines to the world.³¹ According to Mashadi, “Artistic developments in Southeast Asia from the 1950s on were affected by an

²⁵ Nervasa, “Asia’s Mecca of the Arts,” 17.

²⁶ Nervasa, “Asia’s Mecca of the Arts,” 17.

²⁷ Nervasa, “Asia’s Mecca of the Arts,” 17-18.

²⁸ de Manila, “Parthenon or Pantheon,” 3.

²⁹ “Conjugal dictatorship” is a popularly used unfavorable moniker for Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, taken from Primitivo Mijares, *The Conjugal Dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos and Imelda Marcos* (Manila: Union Square Publishing, 1976).

³⁰ Ahmad Mashadi, “Framing the 1970s,” *Third Text*, Vol. 25, Issue 4, July, 2011, 412.

³¹ For much of the 1950s in the Philippines, abstraction was considered distinct from non-objectivism. Abstraction referred to representations of objects from the world made to look abstract while non-objective referred to works that showed no object at all—pure abstraction. The most succinct discussion of this during the period is Purita Kalaw-Ledesma’s dissertation. Purita Kalaw-Ledesma, “A Critical Analysis of Modern Painting in the Philippines Today,” (master’s thesis, University of the Philippines, 1955) 73-74.

increased access to Euro-American artistic models and an eventual shift towards ‘internationalism,’ expressed through the pervasiveness and institutionalization of abstraction and formalism as dominant modes of expression.”³² He notes that during the 1950s and 60s “the language of abstraction” became a dominant one to “facilitate international engagements” and to exercise “international fraternity...played...out through biennales and other large-scale, recurring international events.”³³ By “displacing the conservatism of earlier styles,” abstraction also “attempted to reflect notions of national ‘progressiveness.’”³⁴

The pursuit of international recognition by artists began over a decade before the Marcoses’ control of the Philippines. In *The Struggle for Philippine Art*, a seminal account of twentieth century Philippine Art published in 1974, Purita Kalaw-Ledesma and Amadis Ma. Guerrero disclose that during the mid-twentieth century:

The quest of cultural identity was pre-empted by the *drive towards internationalism*, which took the form of a desire to compete with the rest of the world. This was a very subtle trend; to crash the international scene, it was believed that one had to paint in the *international style*....Consequently it became the ambition of many Filipino artists to be represented in biennales.³⁵

Filipino artists realized their international ambitions through the Philippines’ entry into the Second International Contemporary Art Exhibition in India in 1953, followed by participation in

³² Mashadi, “Framing the 1970s,” 409.

³³ Mashadi, “Framing the 1970s,” 410.

³⁴ Mashadi, “Framing the 1970s,” 410.

³⁵ Kalaw-Ledesma and Guerrero, *The Struggle for Philippine Art*, 67. Kalaw-Ledesma and Guerrero’s reference to a painted “international style” refers to abstraction.

the Spanish-American Biennale in Cuba in 1958, the Venice biennale in 1962, the Paris Biennale in 1971, and finally—according to *The Struggle for Philippine Art*—the Sao Paulo Biennale in 1971, which “capped” the “quest for recognition.”³⁶ This waning desire for international exhibition occurred in part because many artists felt their entries were “lost in a sea of similar works, each working within the same school of abstract thought.”³⁷ [fig. 0.3] Marciano Galang, whose contribution to Paris Biennale was the only Philippine entry to capture the “wild and freewheeling” theme with three wooden bars “simply but strikingly arranged,” proposed that the Philippines should no longer take part in international exhibitions.³⁸ Galang expressed, “It takes so much time, money, and effort to gather, send, and set up the show...these logistics can be used instead for developing art at home.”³⁹ Though the CCP and Imelda’s concerted efforts to develop an arts infrastructure in the Philippines appeared to fulfill Galang’s desire of “develop art at home,” their attachment to an oppressive regime limited his excitement.⁴⁰

While abstraction in the 1950s and 60s had an air of internationalism that reflected the desires of the Marcoses’ political interests, Imelda also had a personal penchant for abstraction. In *Contemporary Philippine Art*, the first tome on contemporary Philippine art published in 1972, Manuel Duldulao writes, “Today, she [Imelda] has both the nineteenth and twentieth century masters, but she herself prefers the contemporary canvases of Luz, Zobel, Ocampo,

³⁶ Kalaw-Ledesma and Guerrero, *Struggle for Philippine Art*, 68.

³⁷ Kalaw-Ledesma and Guerrero, *Struggle for Philippine Art*, 68.

³⁸ Kalaw-Ledesma and Guerrero, *Struggle for Philippine Art*, 70, 78.

³⁹ Marciano Galang’s statement in Kalaw-Ledesma and Guerrero, *Struggle for Philippine Art*, 70.

⁴⁰ Galang and David Medalla protested the opening of the CCP. This will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 1. See Patrick D. Flores, “Temerities,” *Pananaw: Philippine Journal of Visual Arts* vol. 7 (Paranaque: Pananaw ng Sining Bayan, Inc., 2010) 21. Both artists, however, still had artworks exhibited in the CCP during the 1970s.

Legaspi, Manansala, Joya, Zalameda, Hechanova, Sanso, Alcuaz, and Chabet.”⁴¹ According to Duldulao, Imelda expressed to Filipino writer Nick Joaquin, “I like modern. I like the abstract....I like them because they get me to thinking. You know, sometimes I do not understand them. I like things that I do not understand because they make me curious.”⁴² Though abstraction remains connected with Imelda Marcos, and, through affiliation, the CCP, exhibition documentation during the early 1970s suggests that abstraction lost its footing to conceptual art under Roberto Chabet and—following Chabet’s resignation as Museum Director—Raymundo Albano.⁴³

As a foil to abstraction and conceptual art exhibited at the CCP, Mashadi suggests that “realism was deployed in order to critique the state’s patronage of the arts through institutions such as the CCP.”⁴⁴ In citing realism, he refers to Social Realism, an art movement in the Philippines during the 1970s and 80s that included artist collectives such as the Kaisahan, Lingkod Sining, and Buklod-Sining who “explore expressive and popular forms of artistic resistance.”⁴⁵ Under the Marcos regime, social realist artists were mostly excluded from the CCP and viewed as the force of artistic protest against the oppressive regime. Alice Guillermo, art critic and historian who identified the trend in the Philippines, describes Social Realism as a

⁴¹ Duldulao, *Contemporary Philippine Art*, 87.

⁴² Duldulao, *Contemporary Philippine Art*, 88.

⁴³ This will further be discussed in Chapter 3 of the dissertation. Patricia Tumang, “New Trajectories of Contemporary Visual and Performing Arts in the Philippines,” in *Asia Art Archive 01* (Manila: The Japan Foundation, Manila, 2017), 9. “The major art movements that emerged from the 1970s were Social Realism and Conceptual Art. Roberto Chabet, the CCP Museum’s first director (1967-1970), and other conceptual artists and practitioners rejected fixed notions of art and art-making in favor of a temporal, conceptual, and process-based approach to art, while artists like Benedicto “Bencab” Cabrera and Jose Tence Ruiz believed that art should reflect the real conditions of everyday life. These new expressions found favor over abstraction, which was heavily promoted by Imelda Marcos in a move away from figuration post-World War II, and is associated with Filipino artists Arturo Luz and Fernando Zobel.”

⁴⁴ Mashadi, “Framing the 1970s,” 413.

⁴⁵ Lisa Ito-Tapang, “Visual Arts and Activism in the Philippines: Notes on a New Season of Discontent,” *Asia Art Archive 01* (Manila: The Japan Foundation, Manila, 2017), 23.

“school of movement in art which exposes the true conditions of society...based on the artist’s keen observation of reality and proffers alternatives for human development.”⁴⁶ Patrick Flores also poses in a brief 1998 essay on Philippine conceptualism and Shop 6 that “the shaping of a social realist and protest language in the Philippine visual arts” undermined “the hegemonic rise of Conceptual Art during Martial Law.”⁴⁷

In another rare essay on Shop 6—a loosely affiliated group of conceptual artists discussed in Chapter 3—Ringo Bunoan also suggests that social realist artists served as a foil to abstraction. She argues that social realists depicted “representations of protest and resistance, works and the masses” that “commanded a necessary break from modern art, particularly Abstraction” because it was “seen as part of the dominant Western culture...supported by the Marcoses through the Cultural Center of the Philippines.”⁴⁸ Bunoan then suggests that social realist artists not only saw themselves as antagonists to abstraction, but also conceptual art because it was “derivative of Western art and judged it as apathetic to the prevailing political and social injustices in the country at the time.”⁴⁹

Bunoan—herself a current active player in the Manila art scene as an artist, curator, writer, and researcher who spearheaded the Chabet Archive for Asia Art Archive in Hong Kong—further contends that tension between Chabet and social realists “led to a clear division between the two schools of thought, creating deep tensions that festered throughout the

⁴⁶ Alice Guillermo, *Protest/Revolutionary Art in the Philippines, 1970-1990* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2001), 4. Also see Alice Guillermo, *Social Realism in the Philippines* (Manila: ASPHODEL, 1987) for more information on social realism in the Philippines.

⁴⁷ Patrick Flores, “Missing Links, Burned Bridges: The Art of the ‘70s,” *Pananaw: Philippine Journal of Visual Arts II*, 1998, 60 – 61.

⁴⁸ Ringo Bunoan, “Excavating Spaces & Histories: The Case of Shop 6,” in *Asia Art Archive 01* (Manila: The Japan Foundation, Manila, 2017), 14.

⁴⁹ Bunoan is also a former student of Roberto Chabet. Ringo Bunoan, “The Case of Shop 6,” 15.

succeeding generation of artists.”⁵⁰ While social realist artists were hailed as steadfast dissidents and exemplars of artistic resistance against the Marcos’ regime, conceptual artists felt uncomfortably associated to the Marcoses due to their dominance within Cultural Center of the Philippines under the dictatorship.

Instead of aligning conceptual art according to this political and artistic divide, I merge art historical methods with longstanding literature in anthropology and political science on the elasticity of resistance to suggest that through form, conceptual artists could perform minor acts of defiance in the CCP. According to James C. Scott in *Weapons of the Weak*, the seminal text on everyday resistance, “The success of de facto resistance is often directly proportional to the symbolic conformity with which it is masked. Open insubordination in almost any context will provoke a more rapid and ferocious response than an insubordination that may be as pervasive, but never ventures to contest the formal definitions of hierarchy and power.”⁵¹

Scott delineates that “ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups [include] foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feign ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so forth.”⁵² Though the artists in the dissertation—privileged with higher education and broad cultural knowledge—were not members of completely powerless groups or the peasantry, in contrast to the social realists more “open insubordination,” they (and their artwork) wielded some of Scott’s aforementioned “ordinary weapons.” “False compliance,” playful deflection, and claims of non-seriousness permitted them to maintain their position in the CCP as their art—

⁵⁰ Ringo Bunoan, “The Case of Shop 6,” 15.

⁵¹ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 33.

⁵² Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, 29.

made from toilet paper, decaying apples, black sand, banana leaves, and acacia pods—soiled the institution from within.

“Open insubordination” not only provokes a “rapid and ferocious response,” it also justifies it.⁵³ As an authoritarian regime interested in international recognition and economic support from the United States, Marcos relied on the presence or illusion of resistant forces during the Cold War. Marcos was only able to rationalize the need for martial law after a series of attacks throughout Manila, which he blamed on communist insurrection. James Hamilton-Paterson notes that Communists in the Philippines suggest Marcos had secretly orchestrated these so-called terrorist bombings, such as the one at Plaza Miranda, to rationalize the need for martial law to international allies.⁵⁴ By refusing to accede to a framework of resistance or compliance, artists discussed in the dissertation compromised the foundation of martial law and called on art’s potential to operate on its own terms, inefficiently and without instrumentalism, within the Marcoses’ unrelenting authoritarian structure of progress and development.

Their apparent compliance to the Marcoses’ diplomatic goals of international contemporaneity and the fulfillment of Imelda’s fancy for things she did not “understand” permitted artists such as Maceda, Chabet, Shop 6 and Junyee to exhibit works that encouraged, in paradoxical ways, discomfort. Made from rusty galvanized metal, *Bubong*, as Bautista *insisted*, was not about slums—absolutely not. Bautista’s use of this everyday scene—one that looked like it came “straight from someone’s house” —invited enough potential for dissent that it made Imelda uncomfortable enough to warrant its removal.⁵⁵ Upon further investigation,

⁵³ Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, 30.

⁵⁴ Hamilton-Paterson, *America’s Boy*, 280.

⁵⁵ Press Announcement for *Five Contemporary Sculptors*, Museum Documentation, Main Gallery, Vol. I, 1979, Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

however, artworks like *Bubong*—ones that edged towards refusal—ran rampant under the Marcoses.

Defining the terms of Conceptualism

Before introducing each of the chapters, I want to address one of the primary questions I have been thinking about as I research Philippine conceptualism—what is it? When did the terms conceptual art and conceptualism become so popular in the Philippines? Why is it presently considered nearly synonymous with “anti-museum art” (which, ironically, dominated exhibitions at the CCP) in the Philippines that started in the early 1970s?⁵⁶ For the purpose of my dissertation, conceptualism remains a lived practice and applied term rather than a prescriptive one. Conceptualism is also not a descriptive modifier for a particular kind of medium in the Philippines. Rather, I use conceptualism to refer to various experimental practices (environmental, situational, conceptual) that began in the 1970s, but have now been subsumed under the umbrella of conceptual art. The aggregation of terms, I argue, developed due to the long-standing, historical rivalry between “social realist” and “conceptual” artists that remains palpable in the Philippine art world today.⁵⁷

In the contemporary Philippine art world, conceptual art is almost always linked to the works of Roberto Chabet, who many, including Bunoan, call the “Father of Conceptual Art in

⁵⁶ In *The Struggle for Philippine Art*, Kalaw-Ledesma describes “anti-museum art” as “free-wheeling and spontaneous” with media that was “ephemeral and transitory.” (163) Moreover, she claims works by these Philippine artists “are not easy to classify” because they “blend painting with sculpture—and they make use of anything they can they can lay their hands on.” (163)

⁵⁷ Aside from informal conversations that have led me to believe this (one scholar jokingly remarked that we could not let social realists dominate the art historical narrative of the Philippines under Marcos), please see recent publications by Ringo Bunoan, “Excavating Spaces & Histories: The Case of Shop 6” and Lisa Ito-Tapang, “Visual Arts and Activism in the Philippines: Notes on a New Season of Discontent.” Another, older article that delineates the tension between social realist and conceptual artists is Patrick Flores, “Missing Links, Burned Bridges: The Art of the ‘70s.”

the Philippines.”⁵⁸ If Chabet is the Father of Conceptual Art, his students are then often called “Chabet babies,” which Ronald Achacoso, one of Chabet’s former students, describes as “a pejorative label” that was given to Chabet’s students by his “detractors” to “dismiss” them while propping up “‘Salingpusa,’ the standard bearer of the Social Realists.”⁵⁹ Bunoan suggests in her essay on Chabet that though his position as the “Father of Conceptual Art” is contested by his critics, to understand what she calls Chabet’s “paradoxical conceptualism” we must “begin with the breakthroughs of the early twentieth-century avant-gardes, such as Duchamp and Malevich, instead of the language-based propositions of the Americans in the ‘70s.”⁶⁰ Instead of looking exclusively towards Western art history, I suggest we examine how conceptual art and conceptualism began to circulate as popular terms in the Philippines.

In an article about the CCP written in 1979, the same year as *Five Contemporary Sculptors*, Benesa notes that conceptualism was ascribed to “any seemingly incomprehensible art” and works associated to “intellectual cognition and not aesthetic perception.”⁶¹ Benesa’s latter description of conceptual art conforms to Sol Lewitt’s elucidation of early conceptual art in America. In “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art,” Lewitt writes, “In conceptual art the idea of concept is the most important aspect of the work.”⁶² He later explains, “What the work of art

⁵⁸ Ringo Bunoan, “Seeing and Unseeing: The Works of Roberto Chabet,” in *Roberto Chabet* edited by Ringo Bunoan (Manila: King Kong Art Projects Unlimited, 2015), 95.

⁵⁹ Ronald Achacoso, “Kick in the Eye to Enlightenment 101,” in *Roberto Chabet* edited by Ringo Bunoan (Manila: King Kong Art Projects Unlimited, 2015), 38. I found during my time in Manila from 2014-2015 and again in 2017 that, as is the case with many pejorative labels, “Chabet babies” had been (somewhat) reclaimed by his students and used comfortably in conversation by the artists in reference to themselves.

⁶⁰ Ringo Bunoan, “Seeing and Unseeing,” 95.

⁶¹ Leonidas V. Benesa, “The CCP Museum and Gallery: Its Program Seek to indigenize Philippine art and wean it away from its west orientation,” *Weekend Magazine*, May 5, 1979, 6.

⁶² Sol Lewitt “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art,” in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 12. Essay first published in *Artforum* 5, no. 10 (Summer 1967): 79–84.

looks like isn't too important," verifying that "conceptual art is made to engage the mind of the viewer rather than his eye or emotions."⁶³ In the Philippines, however, form and materiality also had immensely important roles in conceptual art's early development. As Bunoan observes, it had little to do with the "language based propositions of the Americans in the '70s."⁶⁴

Similar to those in other countries of the region, members of the Philippine art world—including artists and art critics—largely identified conceptual art as a broad category that strayed from clear categorizations of painting or sculpture.⁶⁵ Conceptual art seemed especially entrenched in material concerns related to medium in the Philippines. Oil painting, as it had in many Southeast Asian countries during the late 19th and 20th century, carried the burden of association with Euro-American art and colonialism in the Philippines to many artists.⁶⁶ While the prohibitive cost of oil paint and canvas encouraged artists to find alternatives in cheap found materials and discarded objects, artists were further emboldened to do so as protest against the colonial and commercial implications of oil painting.⁶⁷ While abstraction—abstract painting in

⁶³ Lewitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," 13, 15.

⁶⁴ Ringo Bunoan, "Seeing and Unseeing," 95.

⁶⁵ In one of the few essays on conceptual art in Southeast Asia, Apinan writes, "As for conceptualism, we were taught that 'concept art' was peculiar to the West, along with happenings, performance, lettrism, documentation, earthworks, and body art. This practice of defining conceptual art through textbooks and lumping it with all kinds of other 'isms' has often led to confusion and misinterpretation, and conceptual art was translated by Asian teachers and passed on to students in variable ways. At times, the concept behind works such as Joseph Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* (1965) was deemed irrelevant for art practices in Asia emphasizing technical virtuosity, indigenous elements, and draftsmanship." Apinan Poshyananda, "'Con Art' Seen from the Edge: The Meaning of Conceptual Art in South and Southeast Asia," in *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin 1950s-1980s*, in Luis Camnitzer, Jane Farver, Rachel Weiss, et al., eds., *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s – 1980s* (New York: Queens Museum of Art/Distributed Art Publishers, 1999), 146.

⁶⁶ See Nora Taylor, *Painters In Hanoi* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004); Patrick Flores, *Painting History: Revisions In Philippine Colonial Art* (Manila: UP Office of Research Coordination, 1998); Apinan Poshyananda, *Modern Art in Thailand: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Redza Piyadasa and T.K. Sabapathy, *Modern Artists of Malaysia*, 1983.

⁶⁷ In his "Light and Shadow" column for the *Manila Times* on May 18, 1969, painter Alfredo R. Roces notes that "artist's and student's colors now fall under NEC 533-0301 Central Bank Commodity Classification so that the time deposit required is 150 percent. We believe that these items should be regarded as raw materials which artists

particular—tied to aspirations of international recognition dominated the Philippines through the 1960s, growing interest in sculpture in the late 1960s led to inclusion of alternative materials such as found objects, junk components, bamboo, and burlap in art-making practices.⁶⁸

In 1968, the Art Association of the Philippines and the Society of Philippine Sculptors, which had been active for just one year, organized the First National Sculpture Competition and Exhibition. Eric Torres, another leading art critic who had studied under Zobel, observed the positive recent development in sculpture, noting, “Sculpture, which enjoys no sizable patronage in this country is belatedly waking up and flexing its muscles.”⁶⁹ In his year-end review of the arts in Manila that year, Alfredo R. Roces also acknowledged, “there was...a rebirth of sculpture that brought to the fore young sculptors on whose talents we anticipate new life in this currently moribund medium.”⁷⁰ While painting had dominated Philippine modern art through most of the first half of the twentieth century, the late 1960s saw increased interest in sculpture as a nationalist medium because it could be sourced from readily available materials.

As sculpture began to increase in popularity, artists used found or local materials to develop a local idiom to counter their poor performance in foreign biennales. They also began to expand the footprint of their sculptures to include the space beyond the object’s presence. The term “environmental” to describe artwork gained popularity when David Medalla briefly returned to the Philippines for one year in 1969. During that time, he gave lectures about his work and newspapers noted that he was preparing an exhibition at Ikon Gallery in Birmingham

transform into works of art, and merit tax exemption.” He further suggests that the new Cultural Center could import paint for local artists at cost price. He argues, “Providing artists with the diversity of modern art materials is one such essential step. Art materials should be made available to local artists as cheaply as possible.”

⁶⁸ For more information, please see Manuel D. Duldulao, *The Philippine Art Scene* (Manila: Vera-Reyes, 1977), 129 and Kalaw-Ledesma and Guerrero, *The Struggle for Philippine Art*, 125.

⁶⁹ Eric Torres, “Confused, Poor Relation,” Eric Torres (*Way of Seeing* Column), *Times Journal*, April 24, 1968.

⁷⁰ Alfredo R. Roces, *Cultural Scene '68* (*Light and Shadow* Column), *Times Journal*, December 31, 1968.

called “A Survey of Environmental Art.”⁷¹ In 1970, Galang, for example, also presented an “environmental show” which was described as an exhibition “in which wares are displayed to form the surroundings” at Joy Dayrit’s Print Gallery in 1970.⁷² While Bautista’s *Bubong* was declared a “situational sculpture,” Benesa expressed in his review of the exhibition, “The operative term for shows like this used to be ‘environmental’ instead of ‘situational.’”⁷³ He also places quotations around the terms “concept” and “experience” in describing the works displayed in *Five Contemporary Sculptors*.⁷⁴ In the 1970s, art critics and artists began to group works that defied the conventional categories of painting and sculpture as experimental, conceptual, conceptualist, situational, and environmental art, without much distinction. For example, in one of his columns in the *Manila Times* in 1972, Alfredo R. Roces observes:

There are various movements introduced by “artists” that question so many fundamental premises about art that, in effect, it seems what results can only be called an entirely new definition of art, or simply not art at all. Yet there are very marked world trends under such labels as ‘environmental,’ ‘conceptual’ and ‘performance and situational work’ that apparently view art (and the role of the artists) in entirely revolutionary fashion.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Alfredo R. Roces, “Is Art Dead?” *Manila Times*, March 5, 1972, in Article #28 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc.; Alfredo R. Roces, “He Came, He Went,” *Manila Times*, January 21, 1970 in Article #25 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc.; Alejandro R. Roces, “Bubble Machine, Anyone?” *Manila Chronicle*, December 1969 Article #25 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc.

⁷² “Galang One-Man Exhibit,” *Manila Chronicle*, April 20, 1970, in Article #25 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc.

⁷³ Benesa, “Situational Sculpture,” 27.

⁷⁴ Benesa, “Situational Sculpture,” 27.

⁷⁵ Alfredo R. Roces, “Is Art Dead?” *Manila Times*, March 5, 1972.

Roces appears to question the validity of these new movements in the early 1970s as he lumps together environmental, conceptual, performance and situational work as part of “various movements” by “artists.” In a brief discussion of *Shop 6*, another local critic also groups these terms together and affirms that conceptual art is “largely linked to experimentalism and environmental art.”⁷⁶ Environmental, experimental, conceptual, and situational were used almost interchangeably within the periodicals from the 1970s and generally referred to three-dimensional work that came from but also went beyond conventional sculpture. Many of those terms have largely disappeared from art vernacular from the Philippines and are usually understood as conceptual. As a term and as a practice, conceptual art appears to be one in constant flux in the Philippines. Conceptual art and conceptualism have now become catchall terms to refer to works that went beyond or combined elements of conventional media, drawing from the materialist concerns of sculpture and installation that arose in the late 1960s and 70s.

Chapter Organization

Material Conceptualisms is not intended to be a synthetic or encyclopedic account of Philippine conceptualism from 1968 to 1986. It instead examines the practices of four exemplary case studies of conceptualism or conceptual art practices in rough chronological order. The dissertation begins with the inauguration of the CCP in 1969 (and Chabet’s travels to Europe and the United States as its first Museum Director under a Rockefeller Grant in 1968) and concludes with the Junyee’s second Grand Award victory at the Art Association of the Philippines Annual Art Exhibition in 1986—shortly after the fall of the Marcoses. Though the dissertation establishes that these artworks were not beholden to the ideology of the state, the end of the Marcoses’ control of the Philippines serves as an appropriate concluding date for the dissertation

⁷⁶ Jose Marte Abueg, “Notes on Thirteen Artists and Other Events,” *Business Day*, Dec. 20, 1974, 20.

as many changes took place in the arts after Cory Aquino replaced Marcos. These changes include a shift of programming at the CCP to be more inclusive of social realist artists and a large decrease of funding for the arts, which caused debate and uproar among many artists.⁷⁷

The first chapter focuses on esteemed composer and ethnomusicologist Jose Maceda, particularly his orchestration of *Cassettes 100* (1971), one of the earliest citations of a Kaprow-inspired Happening in the Philippines. The chapter examines in greater detail the social and political context of the CCP, including criticism and protests against the institution during its inaugural years. It also briefly discusses general political unrest and upheaval, particularly among students, prior to Ferdinand Marcos' declaration of martial law. Against the backdrop of protest, the regime established the CCP as a visual and acoustical symbol of Philippine contemporaneity and international modernity through the reclamation of land, attention to acoustics, and architectural design. Instead of taking advantage of the world-class acoustics available in the CCP auditorium, Maceda orchestrated a "sound happening" in its lobby. The music came from cassettes carried by one hundred volunteers largely drawn from the University of the Philippines-Diliman (UP), a popular site of student resistance and protest. I argue that *Cassettes 100* inculcated the potential of voluntary participation and the power of the crowd as it ended with the tearing down of *Cassettes 100*'s flimsy backdrop, leaving the lobby littered with toilet paper detritus.

The second chapter centers on Roberto Chabet, the so-called father of conceptual art in the Philippines. He served as the CCP's first museum director until 1971 and a professor of visual art at UP for nearly thirty years. The chapter begins with Chabet's Museum Director

⁷⁷ A sample of these discussion can be seen in Eduardo Castrillo, "Orpheus in Limbo: Culture under the Shadow of National Priorities and the Homelessness of the Visual Arts," *Sunday Times Magazine*, August 10, 1986, 18-19; Alan Rivera, "If Orpheus is in Limbo, Then it Must Serve Him Right (A Reaction to E. Castrillo's Article)," *Sunday Times Magazine*, August 31, 1986, 4, 6; "Who Will Help the Artists," *Philippine Panorama*, August 10, 1986, 3.

appointment at the CCP, which included an extended tour to the United States and Europe with funding from a J.D. Rockefeller III grant—another example of foreign support for the arts in the Philippines. It continues with his performance of *Tearing to Pieces* in which he ripped apart Manual Duldulao's recently published book, *Contemporary Philippine Art*, in the atrium of the CCP to protest aspects of Philippine art production. Like *Cassettes 100*, Chabet's performance left waste inside of the institution. The chapter continues to discuss some of Chabet's artwork through the 1970s as propositions of how he imagined art—particularly a messy kind of abstraction—could operate in Manila as acts of visual reciprocity. It pays close attention to a series of works in an exhibition called *New Works, 1973* or *For E.H.* in homage to Eva Hesse, arguing that within Chabet's grids are the “bodily perturbations”—ones to remind the viewer of her own body and its potential—that disturbed the system of order and control so desired of the Marcoses' authoritarianism. Chabet's grids suggest that one cannot take the universalism of modernism for granted; the struggle of the upright grid seemed emblematic of the Philippines' own struggle for autonomy, artistic and otherwise.

The third chapter continues discussion of Philippine art in the 1970s with Shop 6, a group of loosely affiliated conceptual artists led by Chabet. Through exhibition documents from the 1970s, I examine how debates between abstraction and representation—the latter a more “honest” form—arose during the early years of the CCP through the annual Summer Exhibitions.⁷⁸ Many artists who exhibited at the Summer Exhibitions established an “alternative” space called Shop 6 after Imelda Marcos deemed their work inappropriate for the National Artists Award ceremony and the Van Cliburn concerts at the CCP in 1973. At Shop 6, artists could gather—a defiant act under martial law—and freely exhibit their representational artworks.

⁷⁸ As discussed in Chapter 3, representation as a more “honest” form than abstraction appeared in notes for Summer Exhibition 1972.

The chapter examines how Shop 6's use of trash materials and their intended estrangement countered the Marcoses' cultural agenda of *katotohanan, kagandahan at kabutihan* (truth, beauty and goodness).

The fourth chapter explores the early works of Luis "Junyee" Yee, Jr., widely known as an indigenous installation artist in the Philippines. I analyze primary source documents, news articles, and exhibition catalogues to reveal how Junyee not only emerged at the same time as conceptual artists, but how many of his material and environmental interests also reflected conceptual concerns of the period. Along with the embrace of abstraction, Imelda's glamour diplomacy extended towards a recuperation of indigeneity with projects like the Coconut Palace. I trace indigenous installation art as a variable practice that eventually expanded out in the mid-1980s to align along regional interests. In a moment contingent on indigenism as a form of cultural power, Junyee manipulated indigenous materials to create prickly bugs that infested the smooth white walls of the air-conditioned CCP.

In determining what to include in a dissertation about Philippine conceptual art during Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos' authoritarian regime, I have taken some liberty to extend the terms of conceptualism beyond Roberto Chabet and his gang of collaborators to include works by composer Jose Maceda and, most surprisingly of all, Junyee, an artist known for his indigenous installations.⁷⁹ While my initial decision to include artists outside the usual "canon" of Philippine conceptual art occurred due to my desire to write about my favorite works—the

⁷⁹ At a discussion at the CCP titled *Working with Collections: Roundtable Discussion for Maceda 100* on October 7, 2017, Bunoan remarked that she considered Maceda a conceptual artist.

ones I found the most compelling or interesting or weird—the more I examined these artists and their works, the more they seemed befitting to Philippine conceptualism.⁸⁰

Conceptualism, as I begin to suggest in the introduction, is not tethered to medium, but rather very pragmatic and material concerns in the Philippines. Artists used found, inexpensive, easily accessible materials and detritus not only to produce an excess of sensorial experiences in Philippine conceptualism, but also due to their incipient emancipatory potential to be free of political and economic structures. Junyee in particular recognizes his mobilization of indigenous materials from the land as a way of asserting his own self-reliance and self-hood in the face of authoritarianism. The following chapters demonstrate how using detritus to create ephemeral situations, ones not intended to be sold, was not just a critique on commodity culture, but rather a way to assert one's own liberation from structures of power.

⁸⁰ I am using the term “canon” quite loosely as there has yet to be an extended, book-length study or survey of Philippine conceptual art.

CHAPTER I

Toilet Papering the Cultural Edifice: Jose Maceda's *Cassettes 100* as Philippine Happening

[fig. 1.1] On the evening of March 8, 1971, following a curious performance at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), clusters of people milled about as they made their way towards the lobby's front doors. Above the crowd hung large chandeliers dripping with tiny Venetian crystals and expensive capiz seashells. Their costly procurement and presence signaled First Lady Imelda Marcos' desire to construct a spectacular international center for the arts in Manila, the capital city of the Philippines. On that particular night, however, piles of unrolled toilet paper and crushed tissue littered the CCP's pristine floor. A stray sheet or two of crinkled paper dangled from the CCP's second-floor ledge; their height and vertical orientation mimicked the strands of chandelier in vulgar fashion. Nathaniel Gutierrez, then documentary photographer for the CCP, captured a bird's eye view of the scene from the CCP's open third floor ledge.⁸¹ His high vantage point flattened the suspended crystals into the white mess of paper on the ground floor, collapsing not only the space, but also the hierarchical distinction between the two

⁸¹ Gutierrez served as the "unofficial resident photographer" for the CCP from 1970 to 1974. He passed away on September 21, 1974. According to a tribute to him published in *Marks*, the short-lived CCP in-house publication, Gutierrez had a "reputation for being a 'specialist' in Cultural Photography.... In the advancement of the visual arts here, publications like Contemporary Philippine Art, Gallery Hopper, PAMANA, MARKS and others owe its quality to photographs to him and his file of negatives—a file which has become in a pictorial sense, a documentary of our cultural history." The tribute also suggested that Gutierrez was known for being a "'pitiless' recorder" who "openly claimed his non-artistic approach to photography" and who "never show[ed] off any share of his artistic temperament." "Nath Gutierrez: Cameraman Par Excellence," *Marks* 1, no. 2-4 (May-Oct 1974). I would contest the claim that Gutierrez—who deserves a longer study—was a pitiless recorder and this chapter owes much debt to his photographs documenting *Cassettes 100*.

materials. While the typical concert might result in some misplaced bits of rubbish, the generous accumulation of crumpled paper revealed the peculiarity of that night's performance.

The strewn paper had once comprised the backdrop of *Cassettes 100*, an avant-garde music concert/sound happening orchestrated in the CCP's lobby by Jose Maceda. Maceda was an esteemed composer and ethnomusicologist at the University of the Philippines-Diliman who cited Edgard Varese and Iannis Xenakis as important influences.⁸² The chapter explores how *Cassettes 100*, one of the earliest and most significant examples of a happening in the Philippines, anticipated refusal as an elastic and indistinct form under Ferdinand and Imelda Marcoses' dictatorship. In spite of claims that art within the CCP necessarily served the Marcoses' cultural agenda, *Cassettes 100*—in its paradoxical challenge to and fulfillment of sensorial experience specific to the regime's technological and socio-political concerns—configured the newly inaugurated CCP as a place in which doubt and contradiction persisted through the occupation of art. Through Maceda's treatment of sound and space, *Cassettes 100* revealed the CCP to be a collection of vulnerable and ambivalent spaces rather than a colossal institution exclusively bound to the desires of governmental instrumentalization.

Maceda used newspaper announcements and cassette tapes to encourage public participation in the happening. In lieu of trained musicians, *Cassettes 100* called for one hundred volunteers to descend upon the CCP lobby wielding their own cassette players. **[fig. 1.2]** Each volunteer played a unique cassette that Maceda had recorded from his detailed score to create a cohesive composition. Maceda intended these cassettes to replace “several musical instruments emitting composed sounds of gongs, buzzers, harps, shells, leaves, flutes, sticks, zithers, human

⁸² See Ramon Pagayon Santos, “Jose Montserrat Maceda: Rebellion, Non-conformity, and Alternatives,” in *Tunugan: Four Essays on Filipino Music* (Manila: University of the Philippines Press, 2006), 125-178 for the most comprehensive overview of Jose Maceda's biography and works. See also Francisco F. Feliciano, *Four Asian Contemporary Composers: The Influence of Tradition in their Works* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1983).

voices, blocks, tubes, clappers and so forth” to create “one complete music not based on melody, but on densities, permutations, filters, windows, and screens.”⁸³ Maceda also provided the volunteers with five numerical diagrams, which illustrated each performer’s intended placement and activity within the CCP’s circling corridors and central lobby. These instructions indicated that after completing the diagrams, the performers were to rewind the cassettes and play them again to “original choreography” by Alice Reyes.⁸⁴ Teodoro Hilado, then technical director of the CCP, designed the light projections used for *Cassettes 100*, and artists Jose Joya and Ofelia Gelvezon created its unusual set of streamers, toilet paper, and large sheets of paper hung from the ceiling and the ledges of the CCP hallways.⁸⁵

Daily newspapers such as the *Manila Chronicle* headlined *Cassettes 100* as a “novel music happening”⁸⁶ and the *Manila Times* described it as a “happening at CCP lobby” that was a “total immersion in environmental sounds.”⁸⁷ During the 1970s, mainstream publications in the Philippines often used the term “happening” to refer to conventional art, performance, and literary events in the 1970s. The *Manila Journal*, for example, would use “This Week’s Happenings” as the heading of a conventional list of art exhibitions and music performances. Those same publications, however, also employed the term “happening” in association with

⁸³ *Cassettes 100* Press Release/Notes, *Cassettes 100* 1971/Jose Maceda File (JM22), Jose Maceda Archives, University of the Philippines-Diliman Ethnomusicology Library and Archives.

⁸⁴ “*Cassettes 100* Participants,” Music Programs, Jan- Mar 1971, Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

⁸⁵ “*Cassettes 100* Participants,” Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

⁸⁶ “Novel Music Happening to be Presented at CCP,” *Manila Chronicle*, January 18, 1971.

⁸⁷ Exequiel S. Molina, “Happening at CCP Lobby: Total Immersion in Environmental Sounds,” *Manila Times*, March 10, 1971.

American artist Allan Kaprow and his carefully orchestrated situations.⁸⁸ *Cassettes 100*'s emphasis on sound and highly scripted nature situates it as a concert of "new music"⁸⁹ and within the canon of "happening": a range of events, situations, and performances blending art and the everyday coined by Kaprow in the 1950s.

[fig. 1.3] Posters for *Cassettes 100* also advertised it as a "A Sound Happening by Jose Maceda." In notes for the performance, Maceda further characterized the performance as "an avant-garde music composition" that was "presented in a sort of 'happening' or an 'event.'"⁹⁰ His placement of quotation marks around the words "happening" and "event" indicate that he intended these terms—and their affiliated forms—as direct citations. *Cassettes 100* included what Maceda himself described in 1966 as John Cage's penchant for "chance" and his use of "'events,' noises, electronic sounds, and all kinds of sound material in an indeterminate organization."⁹¹ Maceda's decision to place both the terms "happening" and "event" in quotations for *Cassettes 100*'s program notes linked the performance to his earlier reference of an "event" in relation to Cage, who premiered his most iconic oeuvre of *4'33"* in 1952 in New York City, where Maceda was studying composition and musicology.⁹² Kaprow also owed debt to Cage: the former had coined the term "Happening" in 1958 while he was attending a weekly

⁸⁸ In his column "Vignettes" in *Business Day* on July 25, 1975 art critic Angel G. De Jesus outlines a brief history of American "happenings" beginning with Allan Kaprow's publication of "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock."

⁸⁹ *Cassettes 100* invitation opens, "The new music as composed by Jose Maceda is also ancient."

⁹⁰ *Cassettes 100* Press Release/Notes.

⁹¹ "Background for new Music," Maceda's Program Notes at the Philippine Premier of *Ugma-Ugma* at the Phil-Am Life Auditorium, November 27, 1964, Music Compositions/Jose Maceda Folder (JM 13), Jose Maceda Archives, UP Ethnomusicology Library and Archives.

⁹² While it was unclear if Maceda had actually attended the performance, as a music student he undoubtedly heard about it. Maceda's main cited influence in New York City is Edgard Varese. He was not only impressed with Varese's musical ideas and concepts but also "his courage and conviction in his non-conformism vis-à-vis the 'mainstream' modernist movement in continental Europe." Santos, "Jose Montserrat Maceda," 128.

experimental composition course taught by Cage at the New School of Social Research in New York City.⁹³ Under Cage's tutelage, Kaprow conceived of Happening, "a form in which a number of events take place together in space and time, never to be repeated in exactly the same manner."⁹⁴ Happenings ranged from "the highly scripted to the spare and conceptual."⁹⁵

Like Cage's events, happenings also implicitly included an element of indeterminacy, which, according to Stephanie Rosenthal, contained a level of risk with the introduction of the general public. According to Rosenthal, Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (1959) "gave way to a radically free artistic form in which the individual participant is crucially entrusted to take responsibility for his/her own actions/experience."⁹⁶ Both "happenings" and "events" referred to in notes for *Cassettes 100* rely on an open-endedness of form that included individual mediation. This key characteristic of happenings permitted the audience members and participants of *Cassettes 100*—similarly "entrusted to take responsibility for his/her own actions/experience"—to act as a faceless crowd that could trash the CCP from within.⁹⁷

Conceived as a happening in the corridors and lobby outside of the CCP's Theater for Performing Arts, *Cassettes 100* allowed Maceda and its participants to reconfigure how space was used within a state-controlled cultural institution in a country on the brink of martial law. Maceda's citation of an established avant-garde practice disguised *Cassettes 100*'s political

⁹³ Eva Meyer-Hermann, Andrew Perchuk and Stephanie Rosenthal, "Introduction," in *Allan Kaprow—Art as Life*, editors Eva Meyer-Hermann, Andrew Perchuk and Stephanie Rosenthal (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008) 2; Paul Schimmel, "'Only memory can carry into the future': Kaprow's Development from the Action-Collages to the Happenings," in *Allan Kaprow—Art as Life*, editors Eva Meyer-Hermann, Andrew Perchuk and Stephanie Rosenthal (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008) 9.

⁹⁴ Meyer-Hermann, Perchuk, and Rosenthal, "Introduction," 2.

⁹⁵ Meyer-Hermann, Perchuk, and Rosenthal, "Introduction," 2.

⁹⁶ Stephanie Rosenthal, "The Risk of Welcoming the Public," in *Allan Kaprow 18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2007), 75.

⁹⁷ Rosenthal, "The Risk of Welcoming the Public," 75.

undertones and permitted its entrance into the CCP under Imelda Marcos, a patron of the arts who wanted to establish the Philippines as a nation relevant to the international art world.⁹⁸ During *Cassettes 100*, soft bodies—one hundred of them carrying cassette players—packed together as they circulated within the confines of the CCP’s concrete walls. The sounds emanating from these moving sources created an immersive sonic environment that absorbed the individual into a collective drone. The pretense of performance art and the indeterminacy specific to happenings generated a site for spontaneous action as bodies absorbed into an anonymous crowd emerged to temporarily deface the CCP without repercussion. By fitting *Cassettes 100* within the internationally accepted paradigm of a happening, Maceda and his collaborators could adorn the lobby with vulgar materials antithetical to the CCP’s ritzy interior—the literal toilet papering of a cultural edifice.⁹⁹

“Slab of Sanctified Carpeted Concrete”: The CCP and its Critics¹⁰⁰

Cassettes 100 took place in the corridors of the University of the Philippines Faculty Center on March 5 and in the lobby of the Cultural Center on March 8, 1971. Co-sponsored by

⁹⁸ In her paper on modernism in South Korea, Sooran Choi similarly argues that the introduction of Fluxus in South Korea was not a form of passive influence. Rather the exoticism of Fluxus—an international and primarily Western practice—permitted Korean artists such as Nam June Paik to disguise and exhibit controversial works under the authoritarian rule of Park Chung-hee. From Sooran Choi, “Fluxus Revisited in a Global Context: Fluxus in South Korea in the 1960s and 1993, the Meta-Avant-Garde,” presented at *Multiple Modernisms: A symposium on globalism in post-war art*, Louisiana Art Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark, November 2, 2017.

⁹⁹ The inclusion of vulgar materials such as toilet paper correspond to Kaprow’s assertions in his essay, “Happenings in the New York Scene,” in which he noted: “The physical materials used to create the environment of Happenings are the most perishable kind: newspapers, junk, rags, old wooden crates knocked together, cardboard cartons cut up, real trees, food, borrowed machines, etc. They cannot last for long in whatever arrangement they are put in.” Allan Kaprow, “Happenings in the New York Scene,” 1961, in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, edited by Jeff Kelley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 20.

¹⁰⁰ Shortly after the fall of the Marcos’ regime, art critic and painter Cesare A.X. Syjuco disparaged the CCP as a “slab of sanctified carpeted concrete” in “Old Dog, New Tricks at CCP,” *Manila Times*, April 27, 1987. From Article #50 of Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc.

the University of the Philippines-Diliman Council on the Arts and the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the Faculty Center iteration was intended for students and faculty members and the second performance at the CCP was open to the public.¹⁰¹ Maceda circulated a press release that called for volunteers to carry the cassettes during *Cassettes 100* in Manila newspapers two months before the event. The announcement required participants to bring their own battery-operated cassette tape recorders and gave priority to those who registered in person with the secretary of the College of Music at University of the Philippines-Diliman, hereafter referred to as UP.¹⁰² Despite its affiliation as a public university, Ferdinand Marcos, himself a UP graduate, had failed to quash the University as a hotbed of activism in the 1970s. Universities such as UP would later be one of the few sites in Metro Manila that people could assemble for political protest during martial law, which Marcos declared one year after *Cassettes 100*.¹⁰³

Protests against the Marcoses had already surfaced before Ferdinand's declaration of martial law in 1972. Shortly after the beginning of Marcos' second term, students organized a set of riots and demonstrations that laid Malacañang Palace—the Marcoses' official presidential residence—under siege.¹⁰⁴ From January to March in 1970, in events that would later be called the First Quarter Storm, students at UP and nearby Ateneo de Manila University led three months of violent student protests directed at Marcos and the colluding United States

¹⁰¹ *Cassettes 100* Press Release/Notes.

¹⁰² Open calls were seen circulated in general audience broadsheets such as *Manila Times* and *Manila Chronicle*. See "A Hundred Cassettes to do 'it,'" *Manila Times*, January 18, 1971, 13; "Novel Music Happening to be Presented at CCP," *Manila Chronicle*, January 18, 1971.

¹⁰³ Vincent Boudreau, *Resisting Dictatorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 136-9.

¹⁰⁴ James Hamilton-Paterson, *America's Boy: A Century of Colonialism in the Philippines* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998), 256, 263-5.

government.¹⁰⁵ That same year, students at UP also humiliated Marcos when they usurped the University radio station to broadcast a recording of Ferdinand Marcos engaging in intimate acts with Dovie Beams, an American actress who starred in one of Marcos' propaganda films.¹⁰⁶ Maceda's affiliation with UP and the privileging of those who registered in person at the university suggested that *Cassettes 100* drew its performers from a largely leftist, politically conscientious pool of students who rallied against the Marcoses. *Cassettes 100* assembled these untrained volunteers, mostly from UP, to perform within the CCP, a visual, technological, and acoustical symbol of Philippine modernity and progress constructed under the Marcoses' consolidation of power.

Soon after Ferdinand Marcos had taken office in 1965, Imelda conveyed her desire of creating a performance venue in the Philippines that would rival international concert halls. At her first press conference as the First Lady, Imelda proclaimed: "My dream is to have a theatre—a completely equipped auditorium where artists can find full expression of their talent. Something like Carnegie Hall, perhaps."¹⁰⁷ Though the CCP was intended to be a state repository of Philippine culture intended for a local audience, critics of the Center noted that its programming consisted largely of international performances flown in from abroad, which diminished the CCP's intended purpose as the custodian and incubator of national culture.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Mark R. Thompson, *The Anti-Marcos Struggle: Personalistic Rule and Democratic Transition in the Philippines* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 37-8. See also Jose F. Lacaba, *Days of Disquiet, Nights of Rage: The First Quarter Storm and Related Events*, (Manila: Asphodel Books, 1986).

¹⁰⁶ Sterling Seagrave, *The Marcos Dynasty* (New York: Harper Collins, 1988), 225; Hamilton-Paterson, 256, 263-5; Raymond Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator* (London: Macmillan, 1987), 67-9.

¹⁰⁷ Pearlie Rose Salaveria Baluyut, "Institutions and Icons of Patronage: Arts and Culture in the Philippines during the Marcos Years, 1965-1986" (PhD Diss. University of California-Los Angeles, 2004), 19.

¹⁰⁸ Pearlie Rose Salaveria Baluyut, *Institutions and Icons of Patronage: Arts and Culture in the Philippines during the Marcos Years, 1965-1986* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2012), 26.

The CCP Main Theater did function like a local Carnegie Hall with a roster of world-renowned performers such as Harvey Lavan “Van” Cliburn, an American pianist who received the International Artist Award in the Philippines in 1974.¹⁰⁹ Since Imelda was interested in forming international alliances during the 1970s, she often entertained foreign dignitaries at the Cultural Center as part of her diplomatic strategy. During the Cultural Center’s opening festivities, which included American representation by then California governor and his wife, Ronald and Nancy Reagan, Imelda mused about the importance of the institution, stating, “A nation must have a place for Art, or it remains a strange sitting in the shadow, outside the sunlit circle of the human family.”¹¹⁰

The CCP continues to be a prominent example of local Brutalist architecture and visual allusion of the Philippines’ bid for an international modernity in the 20th century. Filipino architect Leandro Locsin had designed the CCP—one of Locsin’s most recognizable buildings in the Philippines—against the scenic backdrop of the Manila Bay. When he had received the commission, Locsin, who had long been entrenched in the Manila art scene, had already obtained international and local recognition as the recipient of various awards, including a Pan Pacific Architectural Citation by the American Institute of Architects for consistent design in 1962 and a Gold Medal as the most distinguished alumnus of University of Saint Tomas in 1968.¹¹¹ He would also receive the prestigious National Artist of the Philippines for Architecture in 1990. Nearly a decade before Locsin designed the CCP, the Philippine-American Cultural Foundation,

¹⁰⁹ Baluyut, *Institutions and Icons of Patronage*, 36.

¹¹⁰ Pedro R Nervasa, “The Cultural Center of the Philippines—Asia’s Mecca of the Arts.” *Business Chronicle*, May 31, 1970, 8- 29.

¹¹¹ Nervasa, “The Cultural Center of the Philippines,” 14.

comprising Filipino and American trustees, had commissioned Locsin to design a multi-functional theater in Quezon City.¹¹²

While the theater for the Philippine-American Cultural Foundation was never realized due to conflict between the trustees, the original plans resemble the CCP's design. Locsin translated the Philippines' architectural understanding of space to the *bahay kubo*, or *nipa* hut—a rectangular structure resting on stilts—into “crisp modernist vocabulary.”¹¹³ The initial plans for the Philippine-American Cultural Foundation resemble Locsin's Brutalist interpretation of *nipa* huts as a rectangular block lightly raised from the ground. Architectural historian Gerard Lico describes the plans for discarded Philippine-American Cultural Foundation theater as “a cantilevered rectangular slab... suspended above ground by thin, graceful curvilinear supports, which...were made to vanish into the shadows created by the exaggeratedly projecting eaves.”¹¹⁴

Locsin submitted similar plans for the CCP. During its inaugural year, Filipino writer Nick Joaquin declared the CCP as “a most remarkable phenomenon of architecture: a great massive block of stone that seems to have been lifted up into the air and to be lightly poised there, sustained without effort.”¹¹⁵ Lico argues that this aesthetic was particularly Filipino as the concept of a massive block that appears to float with lightness recalled a rectangular house lifted

¹¹² Nervasa, “The Cultural Center of the Philippines,” 14.

¹¹³ Gerard Lico, *Edifice Complex: Power, Myth, and Marcos State Architecture* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003), 75.

¹¹⁴ Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 89.

¹¹⁵ Nick Joaquin, “A Stage for Greatness,” in *Philippines Free Press*, September 13, 1969, quoted in Gerard Lico, *Edifice Complex: Power, Myth, and Marcos State Architecture* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003), 75.

onto stilts—a commonplace sight in the Philippines.¹¹⁶ The CCP mingles Filipino aesthetics with international sensibility to immortalize the Philippine design into permanent, industrial materials.

Plans for the CCP also differed in location from the initial ones for the Philippine-American Cultural Foundation Theater. Originally, the theater would have been situated on a 10-hectare lot in Quezon City, closer to the University of the Philippines-Diliman in Metro Manila. Imelda expressed distaste for the location and remarked, “When I looked at the property I found that it was full of squatters...So I looked for another place...What I found was water.”¹¹⁷ The First Lady intended her new cultural complex to resemble the French Riviera. To satisfy that desire, the CCP Theater of Performing Arts was built on reclaimed land along Manila Bay.

Presidential Proclamation No. 20 of March 12, 1966 had authorized “reclamation along Manila Bay and secured a 28-hectare reclaimed land area...to construct, establish and maintain in a single site a national theatre, a national music hall, an art gallery and other such buildings.”¹¹⁸ Land reclamation involves the creation of previously non-existent land on water by filling it with cement and dirt until the land rose above the water. Lico argues that the Marcoses’ manipulation of “natural physiology...by reclaiming the land from the sea” was a “symbolic gesture not only of its subversion of nature, but also of the impending social changes, especially the declaration of martial law in 1972.”¹¹⁹ The Marcoses’ reclamation of land—the literal creation of physical place from nothing—was not only testimony to their absolute power but also anticipated the eventual imposition of martial law.

¹¹⁶ Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 101.

¹¹⁷ Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 88.

¹¹⁸ Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 85.

¹¹⁹ Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 85.

Although the Marcoses had originally conceived of the CCP as a theater space for live performance and musical performances in particular, unused rooms in the building were quickly co-opted as art exhibition spaces. The fourth and third floor rooms, initially used for temporary exhibition, still remain the CCP's primary visual art spaces. Since a separate structure for the visual arts never materialized, the CCP Theater of Performing Arts building hosted Manila's most promising artists, choreographers, and composers. They would often congregate and collaborate on various projects; *Cassettes 100* benefitted from the close proximity of Filipino creative talent. Aforementioned Joya and Gelvezon, both prominent artists in Manila, organized the visual aspects of *Cassettes 100*, and Reyes, a top Philippine choreographer, planned an accompanying set of dance movements to follow Maceda's initial diagrams. Many well-known artists of the period also contributed their labor to the CCP. Painters Fernando Zobel, Arturo Luz, and Cesar Legaspi designed murals around the Center, while sculptor Vicente Manansala donated the bronze wall sculpture at the entrance of the theater.¹²⁰ H.R. Ocampo also donated his painting *Genesis*, which was used as the template for the drop curtain in the Main Theater.¹²¹

Through its visual reference to international architecture and its mastery of natural physiology through the reclamation of land, the CCP symbolized the Marcoses' consolidation of state power and commitment to rapid—and internationally legible—modernization. As the grand pet project of the First Lady, the CCP was criticized for using State funds and land to subsidize a building she had claimed would be mostly privately funded.¹²² Senator Benigno Aquino,

¹²⁰ Nervasa, "The Cultural Center of the Philippines," 16.

¹²¹ Angel G. de Jesus, "H.R. Ocampo: Unique and Filipino," *Archipelago* Vol. 5, No. 51. September 1978, 18.

¹²² For criticism during the CCP's early years, see Jose S. Salazar, "'Not Where It's At': Cultural Center Is Anti-Revolutionary Instrument of Establishment And Therefore Not Truly Cultural, Says Author," *Philippines Free Press*, November 15, 1969, 14-15 and 33; Quijano de Manila, "Parthenon or Pantheon: The First Lady Answers the Blast on The Cultural Center by Senator Aquino," *Philippines Free Press*, February 22, 1969, 2-3 and 72-3.

Marcos' formidable political adversary whose assassination in 1983 provoked the People's Power Revolution, thought the government could more effectively use the money to serve impoverished populations. During the building's inaugural years, he questioned the CCP's legality of using State funds and its potential to truly benefit the people of the Philippines.¹²³

The CCP's entanglement with the Marcoses also created suspicion towards those who exhibited at the institution. Artists such as Marciano Galang and David Medalla, the latter of whom an avant-garde artist known for his "bubbling machines" and "pervasive influence over young 'rebels,'"¹²⁴ picketed at the opening of the CCP with poet Jose Lansang, Jr.¹²⁵ Medalla also called Locsin "a freak architect for designing the 'monstrosity,'" and was "very vocal about the Cultural Center not buying his bubbling machine."¹²⁶ In another article criticizing the CCP shortly after its inauguration in 1969, Marra Pl. Lanot also argued that the CCP "breaks the unity of the artists...Only the yes artist and the name artist will make it to the Center, never the young talented rebel on the left of the Center."¹²⁷ After Lanot's criticism, programs such as Roberto Chabet's *Thirteen Artist Exhibition* and Raymundo Albano's *CCP Annual* belied the notion that

¹²³ De Manila, "Parthenon or Pantheon," 72-3.

¹²⁴ "The Visual Arts in '69," *Manila Chronicle*, January 11, 1970.

¹²⁵ See Virginia Ty-Navarro, "Cultural Center and Barbecue Artists," *Manila Chronicle*, November 4, 1969, 17; Maximo V. Solivan, "David Deserved a Medal and Not Cops' Truncheon," *Manila Times*, September 12, 1969; Jose Lacaba, "The Art of Politics. The Politics of Art," *Philippine Free Press*, September 20, 1969, 72; Benjamin V. Afuang, "Philippine art and Culture's Sanctuary," *Manila Sunday Times*, September 28, 1969, Article #25 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc. for a sample of media coverage concerning Medalla's protest in 1969. See also: Patrick D. Flores, "Temerities," *Pananaw: Philippine Journal of Visual Arts* vol. 7 (Paranaque: Pananaw ng Sining Bayan, Inc., 2010) 21 for more recent commentary.

¹²⁶ Ty-Navarro, "Cultural Center and Barbecue Artists," 17. According to a *Sunday Times* article by Celso G. Cabrera titled "Imelda and Our Cultural Institutions—II," from March 26, 1972 (in Article #28 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc.), Imelda did want to buy Medalla's *Cloud Canyons* for the CCP. Cabrera noted that "the Filipino sculptor failed to sell his masterpiece (Bubbling Machine) for P\$5,000 because center management could not understand the work" even though "Imelda reportedly instructed the Center to raise money and buy Medalla's masterpiece."

¹²⁷ Marra Lanot, "A Center for Whom?" *Manila Chronicle*, November 16, 1969, 20.

“rebel” artists were prohibited from the CCP as both programs promoted young and often provocative artists. Medalla’s *Bubble Machine*, listed as an example of kinetic art, was even exhibited in 1971 in the CCP’s *The Fifties, A Tribute to Lyd Arguilla* exhibition.¹²⁸

Scathing criticism of the CCP common during its inaugural years dubiously subsided as the decade progressed under the Marcoses. Purita Kalaw-Ledesma—the founder of the Art Association of the Philippines—and Amadis Ma. Guerrero suggest in *The Struggle for Philippine Art* that despite early “misgivings” that the CCP would be used as a “political weapon” through the years, this “suspicion seems to have died down.”¹²⁹ The decreased “suspicion” might have occurred because Ferdinand Marcos began to suppress freedom of press during martial law, including closing the weekly *Philippine Free Press*—the Philippines’ oldest, most respected publication that circulated information on Marcos’ affair with Dovie Beams and much of Senator Aquino’s accusations against the CCP.¹³⁰ As the Marcoses’ regime exerted control over the usual outlets (e.g. press and radio) used for public protest in a functioning democracy, people found creative ways to exercise forms of refusal or self-determination right underneath the prying eyes of authority.

That Maceda chose to site *Cassettes 100* in the CCP lobby rather than the Main Theater redefined the function of specific spaces in the state-supported institution. The CCP was not only a visual representation of modernity through what Lico describes as a “progressive image of Manila...through distinctive modern architecture,” but its Main Theater was also a symbol of

¹²⁸ In “The Fifties, A Tribute to Lyd Arguilla,” Documentation of Exhibitions, Main Gallery, 1971, “Bubble Machine” is listed as a “Kinetic Sculpture.”

¹²⁹ Purita Kalaw-Ledesma and Amadis Ma. Guerrero, *The Struggle for Philippine Art* (Manila: Vera-Reyes, 1974), 124.

¹³⁰ Hamilton-Paterson, *America’s Boy*, 323; Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator*, 13.

sonic modernity through its command of reverberation.¹³¹ Hailed as “an acoustical marvel” by the *Business Chronicle*, the CCP Main Theater symbolized the Marcoses’ aspiration of sonic modernity in the Philippines.¹³² Engineers from Bolt, Beranek, and Newman, a top acoustical consulting firm from the United States, worked to bring perfection to the Main Theater, the centerpiece of the CCP.¹³³ Since the CCP’s Theater was designed to host a range of performances with various sonic concerns, acoustical engineering had to account for those differences. The engineers incorporated variables such as a sound-absorbing curtain that could be lowered behind an acoustic wire mesh and adjustable sound reflectors hidden from public view to accommodate the type of reverberation needed for different performances.¹³⁴

These accoutrements allowed the Main Theater to control its reverberation, which Emily Thompson describes as “the lingering over time of residual sound in a space” that marks the specificity of that place.¹³⁵ The technological command over reverberation, Thompson explicates, was “modern because it was perceived to demonstrate man’s technical mastery over his physical environment, and it did so in a way that transformed traditional relationships between sound, space, and time.”¹³⁶ In a *Business Chronicle* article discussing the CCP’s construction in 1970, V.S. Sambo observed that the Main Theater auditorium could carry “sound, clear and unblurred, to the furthest seat so that every member of the audience felt

¹³¹ Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 144.

¹³² V.S. Sambo, “Center for the Performing Arts—An Acoustical Marvel,” *Business Chronicle*, May 31, 1970, 30.

¹³³ Sambo, “Center for the Performing Arts,” 33.

¹³⁴ Sambo, “Center for the Performing Arts,” 33.

¹³⁵ Emily Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 3.

¹³⁶ Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity*, 3-4.

himself the epicenter of soaring sound.”¹³⁷ Just as the reclamation of land exhibited the conjugal dictatorship’s authority over nature, the attention paid to reverberation also demonstrated “mastery over their physical environment” as representative of the regime’s “progressive image.”¹³⁸ The flattening of reverberation, which had previously been a building’s acoustical signature, had the consequence of producing a “modern sound [that] was easy to understand, but...had little to say about the places it was produced and consumed.”¹³⁹ That the Main Theater’s superb acoustics allowed it to transmit sound as well as, or better than, other major concert halls meant that it could be any concert hall in the world.

[fig. 1.4] Maceda’s decision to situate *Cassettes 100* in the lobby—an open and public area immediately outside the Main Theater—denied the CCP fulfillment of its function as a sonic marvel equivalent to other premier concert halls.¹⁴⁰ While acoustical engineering in the Main Theater controlled reverberation, the bank of glass doors that faced Roxas Boulevard, a broad boulevard full of city noises, failed to seal out sound from the world outside. Despite the exclusive car ramps that encircle an enormous fountain and the expanse of green lawn in front of it that separate the front of the CCP from the street, everyday sounds like honking car horns seep through the cracks between the doors.¹⁴¹ These sounds would consequently become part of the immersive sonic environment produced by *Cassettes 100*.

Not only was noise from the outside world included in the happening; the building’s transparent facade also expanded *Cassettes 100*’s set to include the area outside of the CCP. Like

¹³⁷ Sambo, “Center for the Performing Arts,” 30.

¹³⁸ Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 144.

¹³⁹ Thompson, *Soundscape of Modernity*, 3.

¹⁴⁰ Posters for *Cassettes 100* show that the performance actually cost 5 pesos to attend.

¹⁴¹ These days it is not uncommon to see people exercising in front of the doors at the CCP.

the hanging pieces of paper, the urban expanse was part of the backdrop to *Cassettes 100* as people circulated in front of it during the happening. Colored lights from *Cassettes 100*'s lighting design also projected through the CCP's transparent facade onto the surfaces outside. The light's reach reciprocated the outside world's intrusion into the happening as the happening also infringed upon the world outside. While the Marcoses' crusade for international modernity created a performance venue that could exist anywhere, *Cassettes 100*, sited just outside of the Main Theater, emphasized through sound and sight the specificity of place—the city of Manila through the CCP's transparent façade.

Notes on *Cassettes 100* also emphasize the importance of siting it in the “corridors” as a way to integrate the “artistic sound world” into public life. According to the notes:

A music played in corridors rather than on the stage brings artistic sound world into the everyday life of men who work in buildings. At the same time the participation of the public in the production of sound exemplifies the role of the masses in today's life—in industry, consumption of goods, and political participation.¹⁴²

Maceda suggested that *Cassettes 100*, which obtained performers through mass media announcements, “exemplifies the role of the masses” in the public realm, including “political participation.”¹⁴³ He acknowledged the potential of the mass of sound and bodies within the controversial CCP as one that could resemble political participation or protest. The absence of an elevated stage and lack of conventional spotlight obscured the visibility of the distinct performers. Volunteer performers and audience members fluctuated in and out of being seen and not seen as lights flashed around them; everyone participated in watching and being watched.

¹⁴² *Cassettes 100* Press Release/Notes.

¹⁴³ *Cassettes 100* Press Release/Notes.

The inclusion of an untrained public within an unconventional space permitted people to eschew the usual codes of behavior for concerts at the institution.

Maceda's siting of *Cassettes 100* in the corridors and lobby of the CCP, rather than its carefully engineered theater, permitted people to contemplate how, like the structure of *Cassettes 100*, they could position themselves in physical and metaphorical structures of power in non-complicit, but not immediately critical, ways. Maceda created a participatory space in which the outside world and all its noises—antithetical to the ideals of Marcoses exemplified by the command of reverberation in the CCP Main Theater—might be incorporated into the happening. Though *Cassettes 100* made use of the CCP's infrastructure and space, it did so outside of the place prescribed for musical performances. *Cassettes 100*'s location refused to fulfill the building's function as an acoustical marvel and symbol of sonic modernity.

Cassette Recording and the Drone in *Cassettes 100*

Situating *Cassettes 100* in areas immediately outside of the Main Theater was not Maceda's only rejection of the CCP as an acoustical feat. His inclusion of one hundred cassettes spurned the CCP's technological advancements intended to support live music—both local and from abroad—in the Philippines. While Locsin's architectural plans for the CCP also acknowledged elements of the local culture through conceptualizing the Filipino *nipa* hut into concrete, the musical programming within the institution did not favor local instruments. During the months following the opening of the CCP, one of its major objectives was to bring foreign artists to enrich the Philippines' cultural development and to establish it as a center for the arts in Asia. These included performances such as ones by the London Philharmonic, whose members

described the Main Theater as “acoustically the best they have performed in.”¹⁴⁴ Local or native music lagged in support compared to the piano, a more internationally recognized form of performance.¹⁴⁵ Maceda, however, was committed to using native instruments made from local materials for his compositions.

Cassettes 100—Maceda’s only composition to exclusively use cassette tapes—drew inspiration from his years of diverse musical education and research in the Philippines, France, and the United States. This included frequent visits to Varese’s apartment while Maceda studied composition and musicology in New York and the study of *musique concrete* under Pierre Schaeffer, who had also worked closely with Varese, at the French National Radio.¹⁴⁶ During Maceda’s time in Paris, he also visited *Musee de L’homme*, where his observation of gongs and other non-Western musical instruments at the museum inspired him to consider these instruments as sources of sound for *musique concrete*. As part of his doctoral studies in ethnomusicology at the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA), he completed his dissertation on fieldwork in the Philippines by recording local instruments and music throughout the archipelago.

In “Philippine Music and Contemporary Aesthetics,” Maceda explicates: “In the same way that modern art is making use of primitive basketry, woodwork, and pipes, and their basic materials—bamboo, rattan, woods—modern music is using concepts of older music.”¹⁴⁷ Maceda places music within a modernity that references the particularities of Philippine instrumentation; modernity was not, therefore, contingent on an ahistorical development or progress, but rather it

¹⁴⁴ Nervasa, “The Cultural Center of the Philippines,” 12.

¹⁴⁵ Baluyut, *Institutions and Icons of Patronage*, 33-34.

¹⁴⁶ Santos, *Tunugan*, 130.

¹⁴⁷ Jose Maceda, “Philippine Music and Contemporary Aesthetics,” in *Cultural Freedom in Asia: Rangoon*, ed. H. Passin (Tokyo and Rutland, VT, 1956), 120.

requires acknowledgment of the past. Using “primitive” materials, as articulated by Maceda, was not a new concept, but rather one that was being concurrently examined through visual art practices. By using instruments made from indigenous materials, Maceda put forward modernity in the Philippines that relied on its peculiar place over international equivalency and contemporaneity.

One of Maceda’s earliest groundbreaking works to use indigenous instruments was *Pagsamba*, or *Music for a Religious Ritual*, which premiered at the University of the Philippines Circular Chapel of Holy Sacrifice on January 24, 1968.¹⁴⁸ A precursor to *Cassettes 100* in Maceda’s treatment of sound masses and careful mapping of performers in architectural space, *Pagsamba* included one hundred musicians who played instruments such as clappers, buzzers, scrapers, or sticks; one hundred vocalists who “utter high and low pitches in dense and thin combinations”; five groups of five male vocalists who chant/sing/mumbled disjointed lines; and two groups of gongs, each made up of eight people, for a grand total of 241 participants. While *Cassettes 100* included detailed diagrams to dictate the changing positions of the cassette-wielding participants, *Pagsamba* included a circular plan for its performers [fig. 1.5]. In his notes for *Pagsamba*, Maceda emphasized:

Space is also a part of the structure of this musical creation, which is conceived for a circular hall. Each of the 100 instrumentalists, each of the 100 vocalists, and each gong player occupy a seat along with the audience...Any person whether musician or listener, wherever he may be seated, would receive an impact of sounds different from those viewed by another seat in another segment of the circle.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ From Maceda’s Notes for *Pagsamba*, *Pagsamba* Archive File (JM-25), Jose Maceda Archives, UP Center of Ethnomusicology Library and Archives.

¹⁴⁹ Maceda, Notes for *Pagsamba*, *Pagsamba*.

Pagsamba was Maceda's earliest experiment in producing sound masses, or sound clouds, with specific architectural space in mind. The performance included the participation of a number of musicians and singers, including the Ellinwood Chancel Choir, Far Eastern University Glee Club, Manila Cathedral Male Chorale, University of the East Mixed Concert Chorus, UP Conservatory of Music Students, and UP Madrigal Singers among others. While Maceda had composed *Pagsamba* to be sited in a circular auditorium, his notes for the performance indicate flexibility in the composition's instrumentation. Maceda claimed that "as an experience, *Pagsamba* may be conceived of in different ways—as a stereophony of live sounds produced by individuals, as music that can be transmitted by computing and electronic machines, and as malleable sound which can assume different shapes following the sounds of similar musical instruments found in various cultures."¹⁵⁰ He further suggested that one could also simply seat 241 loudspeakers in the circular hall, with each loudspeaker animated by a separate sound track.¹⁵¹ Maceda acknowledges, however, that 241 machines would fail to capture the imperfection and imprecision of 241 people.¹⁵²

While Maceda proposed multiple alternative ways—including one that only used machines—to "experience" *Pagsamba*, *Cassettes 100* further pushed Maceda's experimentation with shifting sound masses through space. Instead of the single static diagram used for *Pagsamba*, *Cassettes 100* included five diagrams with specifically numbered positions from one to one hundred that corresponded with the individual cassettes and the people carrying them. As

¹⁵⁰ Maceda, Notes for *Pagsamba*, *Pagsamba*.

¹⁵¹ Maceda, Notes for *Pagsamba*, *Pagsamba*.

¹⁵² Maceda, Notes for *Pagsamba*, *Pagsamba*.

an ethnomusicologist, Maceda was also fond of tape recording's capacity to document and disseminate "a comprehensive connection with the past"—particularly of musical practices that were slowly disappearing in the Philippine provinces.¹⁵³ Yet, the practical qualities that permitted the tape recorder—a portable and relatively affordable device—to function well as a tool for the ethnomusicologist also made it possible for it to be used in more nefarious circumstances.

Tape recording was undoubtedly a fraught medium in Manila when *Cassettes 100* premiered at the CCP. In 1970, students commandeered the university radio station to broadcast recordings of Marcos in an intimate moment with American actress Dovie Beams.¹⁵⁴ As his primary mistress during the late sixties, Beams had secretly tape-recorded the couple's private trysts. The US Embassy had offered her \$100,000 cash in exchange for the recordings, but she refused. Instead, Beams held a press conference at the Bay View Hotel across from the Embassy, where she played recordings of her illicit encounters with Marcos to reporters. Unknown to Beams, two of these clever reporters also secretly recorded her tapes in the hotel room during the press conference. One of these bootlegs made its way to the UP's student radio station, where it was again played for the station's listeners.¹⁵⁵

The Dovie Beams scandal demonstrated tape recording's capacity to bear witness and relay information to harm Marcos by exposing the fragility of his authority. A minor actress from Tennessee could use sound recording to implicate the President Marcos in a humiliating public

¹⁵³ Maceda, "Philippine Music and Contemporary Aesthetics," 120. Not only do the Maceda archives contain much of Maceda's recordings from his fieldwork, but in one text he also articulated how he wished to document Philippine music and send it via tape recording to libraries around the world—an inversion of the Marcos' intent to bring international live music to Manila.

¹⁵⁴ Hamilton-Paterson, *America's Boy*, 256, 264-5; Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator*, 67-9.

¹⁵⁵ Seagrave, *The Marcos Dynasty*, 225.

predicament. The tapes became “a major topic of mirth and gossip” and made Marcos look “ridiculous.”¹⁵⁶ The clandestine nature of tape recorders allowed anyone to replicate and propagate a moment that embarrassed Marcos and his claim of control—both of his personal life and of the people. Hamilton-Paterson even suggests it is not “beyond speculation that the act of declaring martial law contained an element of rebound from the confusions and depression of the affair with Dovie Beams.”¹⁵⁷ That Beams was unable to restrict circulation of her own covert recordings demonstrated the potential of the people to mobilize in unpredictable ways to subvert Marcos. The memory of tape recording’s capacity for unbridled dissemination of information was fresh when Maceda composed *Cassettes 100*—a concert that called for one hundred people brandishing cassette recorders through an edifice that symbolized the Marcoses’ cultural power.

The exclusive use of tape recorders over live instrumentation also permitted people with no technical or musical training to volunteer as performers in *Cassettes 100*. Alfredo Roces, a critic for the arts column in the *Manila Times*, stated in his review of *Cassettes 100* that the concert sought “the participation of the public in music-making, the playing of music in public places other than concert halls.”¹⁵⁸ Another review of *Cassettes 100* noted, “This is all part of the new thinking that music not need be limited to the capabilities of human voice or the skills of the instrumentalists.”¹⁵⁹ Since anyone could participate in new music, regardless of skill, it demanded the masses to take part in the development of culture. *The Asia Magazine* reporter

¹⁵⁶ Hamilton-Paterson, *America’s Boy*, 256, 263.

¹⁵⁷ Hamilton-Paterson, *America’s Boy*, 283. Another article, published shortly after the deposition of Ferdinand Marcos, noted, “What made the Beams-Marcos affair controversial was not the relationship itself...but the alleged tapes of Dovie’s lovemaking sessions with the deposed president....The tapes were played on radio during the height of the student activist rebellion in 1971–1972 which prompted Marcos to proclaim martial law.” In Nicole S. De Guzman, “Dovie Beams Loved Marcos as Much As He Did,” *Manila Times*, July 8, 1986, 15.

¹⁵⁸ Alfredo R. Roces, “Cassettes in Concert,” *Manila Times*, March 10, 1971.

¹⁵⁹ Leonor Orosa Goquingco, “Cassettes 100: Pushing Criteria Overboard?” *Manila Bulletin*, March 14, 1971.

observed, “Maceda’s idea was to create a truly contemporary music for the ‘mass age’—massed populations, mass production, mass consumption. His theory is that the masses, even if musically unschooled, can take a conductive role in the creation of music.”¹⁶⁰ Maceda’s decision to use tape recording—an easily accessible form of technology—emboldened mass participation.

Mass participation invited disorder. Though Maceda intended participants to simultaneously play their cassettes to produce one penultimate performance, he was more than aware of the potential for human error. The volunteers were unlikely to turn on their cassette players at precisely the same moment and move through the CCP lobby into their positions at the same pace. Since each performer brought a personal cassette player, the quality of the sound from the disparate apparatuses would also be variable. Yet, since the sounds of *Cassettes 100* depended on drone rather than melody, the performance permitted for a lack of precision since the drone was readily absorbed in the hum of a crowd. While a line of melody requires individual components to be perfectly, or at least closely, timed, the drone can be imprecise but still “make one complete music”—the bustling noise of a mass of bodies as they move through space.¹⁶¹

According to his accounts and graduate school fieldwork, instruments from Asia prominently featured drone—the consistent repetition of a singular note, or set of notes— rather than melody—a linear set of notes that comprised a pleasing, musical harmony. In a paper presented at the *International Conference on the Traditional Drama and Music of Southeast Asia*, Maceda discussed his research on Philippine instrumentation and states, “In bamboo scrapers for example, there is neither a scale nor a melody to speak of.” He later described these instruments as producing single, steady rhythms—the drone—that he used consistently in

¹⁶⁰ “Chaotic Concert,” *The Asia Magazine*, May 30, 1971.

¹⁶¹ *Cassettes 100* Press Release/Notes.

Cassettes 100's composition.¹⁶² The sounds that he recorded onto the cassettes produce a complete musical composition that, according to his press release, was "based not on melody, but on densities, permutations, filters, windows and screens."¹⁶³ *Cassettes 100*'s score also designates long sections in which one note is played repeatedly over a span of time, including a few pages labeled "Grains," which lists drums, pebbles, aluminum and leaves as its instrumentation in the margin notes of the score.¹⁶⁴

The recording of *Cassettes 100* from its original performance at the CCP begins with Maceda counting down from 10 to 0 over a loudspeaker. The recording sounds similar to the shuffle of everyday life mixed with instances of music. Gentle strains of flute, crinkling paper, popping and banging noises, and the sound of raindrops consistently hitting a pavement are among those heard alongside the buzzing murmur of people's voices in the recording. The bustle of the physical crowd moving about the CCP remains indistinguishable from the sound generated by the pre-recorded cassettes. This crowd was generated not only through the noise produced by the immediate presence of people in the CCP, but was also through the pre-recorded cassettes, extending the crowd's presence beyond the time and space of *Cassettes 100*. The reviewer in *The Asia Magazine* observed, "There was no melody, nor was any melody intended. What each member of the audience heard was an amalgam of sound that deafened, slithered around, faded, irritated, excited and (who knows?) maybe even inspired."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Jose Maceda, "Drone and Melody in Philippine Musical Instruments," in *Traditional Drama and Music of Southeast Asia* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1974), 246.

¹⁶³ *Cassettes 100* Press Release/Notes.

¹⁶⁴ *Cassettes 100* Score, Jose Maceda Archive, University of the Philippines-Diliman Center of Ethnomusicology Library and Archives.

¹⁶⁵ "Chaotic Concert," *The Asia Magazine*, May 30, 1971.

In *Listening to Noise and Silence*, Salomé Voegelin analyzes the social aspect of noise—the drone in particular—and its capacity to render the dense phenomenological sensation of a crowd through aural perception. Voegelin explains:

As I walk through a busy urban street I try to ignore the incessant hum of thick traffic, the noisy commotion and vocal drone of people around me...Sound renders the crowd massive and pervasive, becoming ever denser and more intimidating, encroaching on my personal space... Switch off the drone of hammering footsteps and the aural hubbub of human activity, the crowd shrinks immediately, the frightful beast is tamed.¹⁶⁶

In the passage above, Voegelin suggests that the “noisy commotion” and “drone” made by the people significantly enhances the sensation of a crowd that encroaches on “personal space.”

While Voegelin describes this encroachment as negative, the aural perception of a crowd could also conceal the individual body. *Cassettes 100* made use of that disembodied sound. The cassette players generated a crowd that extended beyond immediate presence. The crowd in *Cassettes 100* was not only expressed through the physical accumulation of bodies, but enhanced through the aural perception of the crowd, cloaking the attendees of the event in a sense of anonymity and privacy. Filled with the perpetual drone, Maceda’s composition sonically obscured individuals within *Cassettes 100* into a faceless crowd that was primed for action without consequence.

Maceda’s use of drone rather than melody permitted a lack of precision since the drone could be absorbed in the hum of a crowd. While a line of melody requires individual components to be perfectly timed, the drone can be imprecise but still “make one complete music” that

¹⁶⁶ Salome Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2010), 11.

included noise from the bustling masses.¹⁶⁷ The social engagement of the volunteer participants was heard through the drone produced by their current movements and through the speakers of the cassette players they carried. By pre-recording instruments onto cassettes, the mass was experienced not only through the presence of bodies, but also through pre-recorded sound, extending *Cassettes 100* beyond the immediate time and space of the CCP. Embedded in a large, anonymous mass, nobody and everybody could be implicated.

“Or do something”: Performing *Cassettes 100* at the CCP

Cassettes 100 not only created a sonic impression of a crowd through the drone and the dispersion of one hundred recordings; it also mobilized a physical mass of bodies at the CCP. Unlike the crowds that gathered at student demonstrations in Quezon City, those present for *Cassettes 100* did not explicitly assemble for protest or political interests. Despite the lack of overt affiliation, the chaos and camouflage of the crowd resulted in physical gestures of freedom or self-determination against the standards of control set by Maceda. Concealment afforded by the large presence of bodies, continually flashing lights, and fragmented surfaces of paper resulted in authorized mischief that foresaw how a faceless crowd could provide privacy necessary for refusal or defiance within the political arena.

Prior to the beginning of the happening, the untrained volunteer performers received a set of nine instructions and five diagrams detailing where to go and what to do. These instructions included minor points such as what volume to set the cassette players, how hard to press the levers of the players, and how to clean them with “cotton dipped in rubbing alcohol” before

¹⁶⁷ *Cassettes 100* Press Release/Notes, *Cassettes 100* Folder, UP Ethnomusicology Library and Archives.

Cassettes 100.¹⁶⁸ The set of instructions also specified to “be sure your batteries are fresh.”¹⁶⁹ The directions assert comic control over the minutiae of how participants were to treat their cassette players to maintain a consistency in sound. Yet, the public announcement for one hundred amateurs to participate in a performance with minimal rehearsal implied that Maceda expected confusion during the concert. The instructions given to participants before *Cassettes 100* further acknowledged that some volunteers might have skipped the happening’s sole rehearsal, noting that, “Those [participants] who did not rehearse, follow the movements of others who rehearsed.”¹⁷⁰

Cassettes 100 required the recording to be played twice. After Maceda’s countdown, performers were to follow the formations diagrammed onto papers given to them before the performance. These handouts noted, “Immediately, after the FIRST performance, rewind your tape CAREFULLY, and go back to your position in Formations I.”¹⁷¹ The participants were further informed, “The change of formations or positions is every 6 minutes. Flood-lights flashing through the chandelier will signal when the change is due.”¹⁷² Handouts noted that they were also required to check in their shoes, which provided a ritual quality to the performance and prevented the volunteer participants from leaving without prior authorization. The removal of shoes would also muffle the sounds made by the performers’ live footsteps, allowing their bodies to quietly and stealthily move around the CCP.

¹⁶⁸“*Cassettes 100* Instructions to Performers About the Use of Tapes,” *Cassettes 100* 1971/Jose Maceda File (JM22), Jose Maceda Archive, University of the Philippines-Diliman Center of Ethnomusicology Library and Archives.

¹⁶⁹ “*Cassettes 100* Instructions to Performers About the Use of Tapes.”

¹⁷⁰ “*Cassettes 100* Participants.”

¹⁷¹ *Cassettes 100*, “Formations I,” Documentation of Music Programs, Jan- Mar 1971, Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

¹⁷² *Cassettes 100* “Formations I.”

Five diagrams included in the handouts annotate the positions assigned to each performer. [fig. 1.6] “Formations I” consists of the numbers one to one hundred scattered across the entire page. On the left side of the diagram it demarcates a lounge area, and on the right, a set of crudely drawn stairs. These features map the diagram to the CCP main lobby. “Formations I” is labeled as dispersion: the hundred participants were first expected to “stand motionless” and then “relax” in their assigned place for six minutes. Since the first formation called for a diffusion of participants and sound throughout the CCP’s lobby, it encouraged the audience members to also spread throughout the space, weaving through the cassette-wielding performers.

Embedded within the five diagrams are negotiations between the participants and their creator. The dearth of physical floor markers, rehearsal time, or legible numerical order suggest that “Formations I” might not be a diagrammatic programming of positions in real space, but rather an illustration of the random dispersion of bodies intended at the opening of *Cassettes 100*. Its fulfillment seems to require the hundred performers to space themselves out in cooperation with others to resemble the dispersion expressed on the paper. Like the mistimed cassette player enveloped in the drone, an errant performer—one who might stand in the periphery instead of following their assignment towards the center—can still appear to be a part of the intended mix of bodies. The opening formation also emphasizes the lack of a central focal point—an absence of stage—and blurs the distinction between performer and audience member.

Yet, an unmistakable crossed out number “23” left visible towards the bottom left of “Formations I” indicates authorial intention, as if Maceda had decided that *that* particular location was unsuitable for “23.” That the “23” remains visible beneath the imprinted X, signals not only its erroneous placement, but that some forethought must have been given to placing each number. This marker of intention suggests that participants had options: they could comply,

adopt a divergent direction, follow someone else, or even mistakenly assume the incorrect position. In spite of their decision (or mistakes), however, the result was the same: the dispersion of bodies occupying the usually unused areas of the CCP.

[fig. 1.7] “Formations II” divides the participants into three groups. Two smaller groups of twenty-five are drawn at opposite diagonal corners from one another; the diagram instructs one group to simply sit and the other to form a single file line that “makes(s) a continuous spiral.”¹⁷³ The large group of fifty people is labeled as the “walking group,” required to “keep moving.”¹⁷⁴ Despite the lack of elevated stage, the two smaller groups are drawn sequestered together in distinct scenes that might encourage audience members to look upon them like pieces of theater. Dividing these two is the “walking group” that mirrors the behavior of the audience members as they traversed the CCP to observe the sitting and the spiraling performers. Although the possession of cassette players and bare feet made the performers distinct from audience members, in darkness it would have been difficult to discern a performer from a member of the audience. The vast majority of people would thus shift between spectator and performer as they navigated through the different groups in “Formations II.”

[fig. 1.8] “Formations III” divides the volunteers into one “big” group and one “small” group.¹⁷⁵ “Formations III” requires the big group, consisting of seventy people, to “go near walls; walk and make the audience walk with you.”¹⁷⁶ The remaining thirty are ordered to sit in

¹⁷³ *Cassettes 100* “Formations II,” Documentation of Music Programs, Jan- Mar 1971, Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

¹⁷⁴ *Cassettes 100* “Formations II.”

¹⁷⁵ *Cassettes 100* “Formations III,” Documentation of Music Programs, Jan- Mar 1971, Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

¹⁷⁶ *Cassettes 100* “Formations III.”

the center and instructed to “examine your recorder, doodle, pretend to knit or do something.”¹⁷⁷ The “small” group appears labeled as such not only because they are small in number, but also because their intended movements are modest. Though these gestures are humble, the participants are given a distinct instance in *Cassettes 100* to follow the directions, yet choose their own method of doing so. In this formation, the text in the diagram also encourages volunteers to explore the boundaries of the building by pushing right up against its walls. This is also the first time the diagrams address the presence of an audience. They encourage the performer to “make the audience walk with you” as they walked “near walls,” expanding the perimeters of the prescribed performance space to the very edges of the CCP. The audience members once again blend with the performers as they join them against the walls of the institution.

[fig. 1.9–1.10] “Formations IV” is labeled as “concentration.”¹⁷⁸ Performers are called to walk in different speeds to the first floor or balcony over the lounge. Then “Formations V” has them disperse again, as they are called to their original position. When the music stops, the diagrams indicate that the volunteers were to “freeze” and hold their recorders “high.”¹⁷⁹ [fig. 1.11] In one of Gutierrez’s photographs documenting this moment, most of the participants follow the directions expressed by “Formations V” and hold their recorders high above their heads. In this position, the performers appear as if they were either surrendering to authority or—due to the position of the paper banners above them—holding up posters in protest at the political rally. The photograph captures a moment in which motives seem unclear; the image

¹⁷⁷ *Cassettes 100* “Formations III.”

¹⁷⁸ *Cassettes 100* “Formations IV,” Documentation of Music Programs, Jan- Mar 1971, Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

¹⁷⁹ *Cassettes 100* “Formations V,” Documentation of Music Programs, Jan- Mar 1971, Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

oscillates between being a representation of surrender or a gesture of dissent. The photograph illustrates how acts of protest or resistance might be veiled as one pose could convey oppositional intentions.

Since the performers were following directions for “Formations V” that demanded they “freeze” and hold their recorders (and thus their hands) “high,” Gutierrez’s photograph might appear to represent an instance of submission—that of adhering to Maceda’s instructions—rather than resistance. Yet, not all of the performers followed directions. To the left side of the photograph is a small, blurry figure who, despite holding a cassette player over his head, seems to have been shifting when this photograph was taken. His face remains indistinct and anonymous. The fuzziness of that figure contrasts with the sharpness of the woman who stands still at the foreground of the photograph. She holds her cassette player high above her head. Though the woman in the foreground followed the directions, the blurriness of the figure behind her implies that he moved despite being ordered to “freeze.” The small size of the muddled body also suggests that it belonged to a child or an adolescent, indicating that everybody and anybody could participate in *Cassettes 100*. This concluded the first half of the performance as the participants waited to play the cassettes again to Reyes’ choreography.¹⁸⁰

Despite the order implied within Maceda’s methodic diagrams, *The Asia Magazine*, an international magazine published in Hong Kong and circulated in the Sunday edition of major Asian newspapers, described *Cassettes 100* as a “chaotic concert” in which “the brave majority [of the audience] thronged through the lobby... and the jungle of toilet paper streamers hanging from the ceiling.”¹⁸¹ In another review of *Cassettes 100* in the *Manila Times*, Exequiel S. Molina

¹⁸⁰ “*Cassettes 100* Participants.”

¹⁸¹ “Chaotic Concert,” *The Asia Magazine*, May 30, 1971.

contrasted the wild ambiance of the evening with the CCP's dignified décor. He observed, "Psychedelic lighting and streams of paper tacked to the ceiling gave the usually staid Cultural Center an atmosphere not unlike that of a hippy hangout."¹⁸² He noted, however, that missing from the party "was the distinctive reek of marijuana smoke. And for a good reason: Everyone was cautioned not to smoke because the paper and inflammable decorative materials could easily catch fire."¹⁸³ Yet, even without drugs and impromptu flames, the CCP's lobby became a chaotic site during *Cassettes 100*. While flashes of light throbbed onto the fragmented surfaces made from suspended planes of paper, members of the audience commingled with volunteer performers as everyone wove through the mess of people and paper in the CCP.

[fig. 1.12] Audience members and volunteer participants moved through the CCP lobby between fragmented planes of paper that comprised *Cassettes 100*'s backdrop. Projected onto the blank, broken surfaces were abstracted flashes of colorful lights that were also casted onto the moving bodies of those present. The projection of colored lights into darkness made some people visible and others imperceptible shadows. Instead of one flat, stable screen, the inclusion of varying surfaces comprised a fragmented backdrop that dissolved into the space of the attendees. Yet, the demands of the structure limited the possibility of the building's dissolution; the planes of paper still had to drape over wires strung across the ceiling or adhere to the ledges of balconies. Simultaneously boundless and bounded, the layered surfaces caused different occasions of concealment within the open lobby. An audience member or participant could disappear behind a plane or become absorbed into the backdrop through the projection of images onto her body.

¹⁸² Molina, "Happening at CCP Lobby."

¹⁸³ Molina, "Happening at CCP Lobby."

[fig. 1.13] In a photograph that inserts us—the ensuing viewer—in the lobby as part of the dense crowd, bodies blend together in a mass of dark shadows as two bright lights flash on the balcony ledge. On that balcony are more cramped bodies—people who seem to gaze towards the animated crowd beneath them. A mess of blurred arms and hands holding onto what appears to be programs for *Cassettes 100* wave around just under the paper streamers. Some of these hands nearly touch the hanging paper as if they might rip them down from their fixtures, anticipating the eventual mess that would conclude the happening. The photograph’s lack of clarity indicates the constant movement of people as they swayed to the sounds that emanated through the CCP. Despite the stillness of photographic documentation, as a viewer enmeshed within the crowd, one can almost feel the rhythmic throbbing of the scene through the blurred bodies and flailing arms. Like Molina suggested, it was *Cassettes 100*’s semblance to a free-for-all hippy hangout, or even a rock concert, that contrasted with the CCP’s usual decorous environment.

While the instructions include numerical markings as to where the individuals were to stand at any given time, specified movements appeared random, or without purpose, allowing participants to make choices and mistakes during the happening, such as moving when one was to freeze. The formations give order to a gathering of bodies that assumes an element of chance—or failure—and *Cassettes 100*’s environment also called for disorder. Joya and Gelvezon brought trash into the Cultural Center lobby to use as the backdrop of the happening. These cheap materials shift between signifying screens, decorations, and literal detritus, mirroring the precariousness of *Cassettes 100* as an authorized performance and an unsanctioned, psychedelic party disguised as such. The ephemeral quality of the tissue paper and

the soft bodies of the large number of people who gathered also contrasted with the CCP's solid concrete construction.

The second time the cassettes played, the participants were to perform Reyes' choreography, which was described by Roces as "mass movements akin to Balinese rituals."¹⁸⁴ Gutierrez captures people performing various gestures and movements, such as synchronously raising their arms in cheerleader like fashion or gesturing towards the sky with cupped hands. In two particularly poignant, yet ambiguous photographs [fig. 1.14–1.15], participants sit on the floor of the CCP as they flash the peace sign and flip the bird. Were these also a part of Reyes' choreography or were they a part of Maceda's call for a small group of participants to "sit" and "do something"? The veneer of performance allowed *Cassettes 100*'s attendees to enact symbolic gestures that, while not common signs of protest against Marcos in the Philippines, aligned *Cassettes 100* with images of dissent such as student protests against the Vietnam War in the United States.¹⁸⁵ The decision to implement antagonistic gesticulations drawn from American influence rather than the usual raising a fist or an "L" sign—symbols more emblematic of resistance against Marcos in protests—demarcated the boundary for overtly politicized action permitted at the CCP. Yet, similar to how *Cassettes 100*'s form as a Western-inspired happening allowed a crowd of students from leftist UP into the CCP to temporarily trash its interior, gestures such as flipping the bird and flashing the peace sign as non-local gestures also concealed discontent under the guise of foreign exoticism.

As the night progressed, the events shown in Gutierrez's photographs dissolved into disorder as people tore the paper streamers from the balconies and ledges of the CCP. In the

¹⁸⁴ Roces, "Cassettes in Concert."

¹⁸⁵ Hand gestures against Marcos during the First Quarter Storm and later during the People's Power Movement included a raised fist or an "L" shape made from one's thumb and forefinger. The latter stood for "laban" which means fight or resistance.

dark, swirls of paper flew through the air like white clouds that wrapped around people and eventually fell to litter the floor. **[fig. 1.16–1.17]** Unlike images of protest or political rallies, people generally appeared jovial as they smiled, clapped, danced, and waved around their cassette players. **[fig. 1.18]** Towards the very end, after the lights had already been turned on to envelope the CCP lobby, Maceda also found himself wrapped in the rolls of unraveled toilet paper as the audience, themselves also standing atop piles of discarded paper, gleefully watched.

Amidst the drone of the cassettes and psychedelic lights, the crowd tore apart the pieces of *Cassettes 100*'s flimsy paper backdrop, smashing the debris into the ground as they moved throughout the building. The feckless and temporary vandalism of the lobby appeared to contradict the intention of the Marcoses' to elevate the CCP as a sacred repository of culture. People gathered not for the purpose of political rally or protest, but for a performance that had lots of rules, yet no concrete goals—a performance antithetical to the Marcos' goal-driven agenda. Hidden among the throng of bodies and the mess of paper, the crowd provided people the anonymity and privacy to trash the lobby of the institution right under the watchful eyes of symbolic authority.

Most of Gutierrez's final photographs of the happening, such as the first one discussed in this chapter, capture *Cassettes 100*'s messy aftermath from the upper level of the CCP. **[fig. 1.19]** In one such photograph, paper and people are dispersed throughout the main lobby. Though many of the architectural signifiers, such as walls or other forms of support, have been removed, the height from which the photograph was taken and its inclusion of chandelier strands intimates the grandiosity of place. Bordering the composition are a handful of security officers dressed in black uniforms and distinctive hats. Visible figures of authority, they stand out from the crowd due to their clothing and sturdy wide stances. While others move about or huddled in

small groups, these security guards, fixed to the edges of the lobby, retain a slight distance from the crowd as each guard maintains his or her position alone. These guards, however, are not the only ones to be unaccompanied in the photograph.

Towards the center of the photograph, right beneath the sparking strands of a large chandelier, a man raises his arms above his head and returns the camera's gaze. He clutches what appears to be a program for *Cassettes 100* as he acknowledges that he, and those who mingle around him, are subject to surveillance. Although his raised arms might resemble a signal of surrender, they flare outwards, expanding his body to declare his presence in that space. He might be seen, but he will be seen on his own terms. While motivations for *Cassettes 100* remain unclear, the photograph captures the temporary defacement of the CCP as representatives of authority—the security guards and the CCP's official documentary photographer—watched. One reviewer of the performance remarked, "To the security guard, the whole thing was a puzzler. 'What are they trying to achieve?' he asked."¹⁸⁶

While the CCP was built to embody the internationalist and modernist aspirations of the Marcoses, its physical presence as a visual, tactile, and aural space depended on compromise and reciprocity between authoritarian intent and the artists who—often on their own terms—exhibited at the CCP.¹⁸⁷ Analysis of *Cassettes 100* reveals how the CCP accommodated for art that modeled aspects of refusal, ambivalence or indifference despite its affiliation with the Marcoses. By using the CCP's lobby and hallways instead of its acoustically designed Main

¹⁸⁶ Molina, "Happening at CCP Lobby."

¹⁸⁷ Christi-Anne Castro, *Musical Renderings of the Philippine Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 126.

Theater and pre-recorded cassettes in lieu of live instruments, Maceda recognized the possibility of operating outside the usual standards for performances at the state-supported institution. He perceived the CCP as a collection of fluid spaces and set an example for the performers and audience members to enact similar acts of impropriety within structural limitations.

Cassettes 100's detailed instructions and roughly drawn diagrams also gave volunteer participants the framework and the leniency to push boundaries and behave indecorously in the staid CCP as they gave the finger and ripped apart pieces of the set. Free from the burden of a spotlighted stage, specific instrumentation, and musical skill, volunteer performers could be anyone. Without physical separation between the two groups, participants could shift affiliations with an audience member or friend by handing them their "instruments." *Cassettes 100* invited defiant actions that eluded clear categorization. Volunteers could comply, comply less, or simply abandon the structures and rules altogether by claiming that they were lost, confused, or following someone else in the crowd. Enveloped in the crowd and generated through the drone of the cassettes and the mass of bodies in the CCP, individuals could misbehave and affirm some autonomy over their everyday actions.

Though *Cassettes 100* led the public to deviate from propriety within a behemoth state structure, it also generated international publicity for the CCP and art prioritized by the Marcoses' state-building efforts. *The Asia Magazine*—a weekly supplement periodical to a large number of newspapers Asia—reported *Cassettes 100* as a "Filipino 'happening'" to an international audience, which further solidified the performance within the canon of happenings.¹⁸⁸ Unlike Gutierrez's black and white photographs, the photographs accompanying the article are in color. One of the images exhibited for international publication occupies an entire leaf of the two-page spread reserved for *Cassettes 100*. The photograph, which includes

¹⁸⁸ "Chaotic Concert," 1971.

only a few people scattered beneath the paper streamers, captures an early moment in the performance when order still prevailed. The paper is still properly affixed to the ceilings and balconies of the CCP; the photograph seems to emphasize the vertical thrust of the colored streamers, the chandelier strands, and the people. Nobody seems to acknowledge the camera's presence and no security guards need to be present—everything is in line.

The careful organization in the large photograph, however, contrasts with the title of the article, “Chaotic Concert,” and two smaller photographs on the adjacent page. Captioned as “more scenes from the ‘happening’” in which “colors blur, collide, and slide away from one another,” these photographs show an abandonment of social convention. The chandeliers that illuminate the CCP lobby are no longer depicted and the vertical order rendered by the large photograph has disintegrated into flashes of light and color. These smaller photographs capture the chaos of the colors from the lights that flickered on the surfaces and bodies present at the CCP. In one photograph, people appear to be lying on the floor in a circle under a burst of light. The contrast between the photographs reveal how the order initially established for *Cassettes 100* eventually succumbed to chaos.

Cassettes 100 and similar artistic practices were effective in compromising authority because the ambiguity and illegibility of their intentions made them difficult to contain. Despite receiving state support under the Marcoses, *Cassettes 100* offered a means for regular citizens to reframe everyday experiences beyond those determined by the state's manipulation of space, technological knowledge, and other political apparatuses. As what *The Asia Magazine* calls a “Filipino ‘happening,’” *Cassettes 100* fulfilled the Marcoses' cultural agenda by demonstrating the CCP's potential as a creative artistic space engaged with contemporary international practices. Similar to Locsin's design of the CCP as a colossal concrete *nipa* hut, the happening,

with its inclusion of indigenous musical elements such as the drone and local instruments, legitimated the CCP claims to represent Filipino culture, including the emerging conceptual and avant-garde dimensions. Yet, the artworks displayed in the CCP, despite their acceptance by the official regime, often defaced or blemished—albeit temporarily—the interior of the edifice in ways that might indicate “veiled critiques from within the institution itself.”¹⁸⁹

Coda: Ugnayan

With support from the CCP, in 1974 Maceda organized *Ugnayan*, a public broadcast event that “used radio stations as if they were musical instruments.”¹⁹⁰ Like *Cassettes 100*, *Ugnayan* also included a number of pre-recorded cassettes filled with drone-like noises and sounds made by indigenous instruments. It consisted of twenty recordings, each simultaneously played over distinct radio airwaves through Metro Manila and six provinces, requiring Maceda to command control over twenty radio stations for the project. The twenty recordings would then blend into a cohesive symphony heard through the city and provinces to expose “hundreds of thousands if not millions” to the event.¹⁹¹

Ugnayan, or something similar to it, had been on Maceda’s mind since he submitted a proposal of similar scale to the Ford Motors Corporation in 1969 called *Music for Automobiles*. In the proposal, Maceda suggested that automobiles fitted with radios and loudspeakers blasting lines of pre-recorded music playing indigenous Filipino instruments circulate Los Angeles’s

¹⁸⁹ Ringo Bunoan, “Seeing and Unseeing: The Works of Roberto Chabet,” in *Roberto Chabet* edited by Ringo Bunoan (Manila: King Kong Art Projects Unlimited, 2015), 73. Bunoan describes Chabet’s artwork as “veiled critiques from within the institution itself.”

¹⁹⁰ Michael Tenzer, “Jose Maceda and the Paradoxes of Modern Composition in Southeast Asia,” *Ethnomusicology* 47, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 107.

¹⁹¹ Tenzer, “Jose Maceda,” 107.

multi-level highways to create a complete composition.¹⁹² He imagined it as a symphony scaled to the size of a city rather than an auditorium. Though Maceda never realized *Automobiles*, he approached Lucrecia Kasilag, the President of the Cultural Center, following the success of *Cassettes 100* to plan a musical broadcast on similar scale to his failed *Automobiles* proposal.¹⁹³ *Ugnayan* eventually received support from the CCP and Imelda.

Prior to *Ugnayan*'s premier on January 1, 1974, residents of Metro Manila and nearby provinces of Rizal, Bulacan, Pampanga, Laguna, Batan, and Cavite received letters that invited them to a "the world premier" of a "unique socio-musical presentation *Ugnayan*, a simultaneous broadcast by 20 radio stations."¹⁹⁴ Centers to listen to *Ugnayan* as a full composition appeared all over Metro Manila and these six provinces, including at Roxas Triangle on Makati Avenue.¹⁹⁵ These centers played the radio station broadcasts over twenty loudspeakers.¹⁹⁶ According to columnist Rosalinda Orosa, *Ugnayan* had received "unrelenting media support" and anywhere between two and twenty million people listened to parts of it on the radio.¹⁹⁷

In order to fulfill his plans for *Ugnayan*, Maceda undoubtedly needed Imelda's support to take control of twenty radio stations. Whereas *Cassettes 100* took place shortly before Ferdinand Marcos's declaration of martial law, *Ugnayan* was performed during some of its peak years. As discussed earlier, under martial law, Marcos took immediate control of television, radio stations,

¹⁹² Santos, *Tunugan*, 147.

¹⁹³ Santos, *Tunugan*, 141.

¹⁹⁴ Neal Matherne, "Naming the Artist, Composing the Philippines: Listening for the Nation in the National Artist Award" (PhD diss., University of California-Riverside, 2014), 85.

¹⁹⁵ Matherne, "Naming the Artist," 85.

¹⁹⁶ Matherne, "Naming the Artist," 85.

¹⁹⁷ Rosalinda L. Orosa, "Ugnayan," *Philippine Quarterly*, March 1974, 40-44 as cited in Santos, *Tunugan*, 142.

and major newspapers to regulate the circulation of information.¹⁹⁸ In *Radyo: An Essay on Philippine Radio*, Elizabeth Enriquez writes that Ferdinand Marcos “accused, among others, the vociferous radio commentators who were critical of his administration, of supporting the insurgency and of destabilizing the government.”¹⁹⁹ According to Robert Youngblood, while Marcos had “initially stated that the control of the media was necessary because the press and radio were ‘infiltrated by Communist propagandists’” he later “claimed that continued restrictions were needed to prevent rightist oligarchs from using the media to undermine the goals of the New Society.”²⁰⁰

Despite the totalitarian control of mass media, ethnomusicologist Neal Matherne suggests that Imelda allowed Maceda to take command of the radio stations as part of “grand artistic projects that celebrated their New Society.”²⁰¹ He argues that Imelda’s support was “no neutral gesture” but rather a call for “ordinary citizens...to experience authentic Filipino culture in the form of nativized instruments.”²⁰² Matherne further contends, “the citizen was encouraged by the First Lady herself to join their nation-mates in a constructed public act of unity.”²⁰³ In other words, Imelda’s desire to present the Philippines as a unified nation to its citizens through the appropriation of “indigenous voices” temporarily released control of mass media outlets for the

¹⁹⁸ See Thompson, *The Anti-Marcos Struggle*, 127 and Youngblood, *Marcos Against the Church*, 47–50.

¹⁹⁹ Elizabeth Enriquez, *Radyo: An Essay on Philippine Radio* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 2003), 30.

²⁰⁰ Robert L. Youngblood, *Marcos Against the Church: Economic Development and Political Repression in the Philippines* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 48.

²⁰¹ Matherne, “Naming the Artist,” 84.

²⁰² Matherne, “Naming the Artist,” 84.

²⁰³ Matherne, “Naming the Artist,” 85. In *Tunugan* Santos similarly suggests that Imelda Marcos had supported Maceda’s particular endeavor due to her own “sociopolitical agenda of uniting the masses” (142).

sake of art that might achieve that unity.²⁰⁴ Moreover, the establishment of listening centers for *Ugnayan* around Metro Manila and the provinces permitted people to publicly assemble in a moment in which people were usually intimidated from public gatherings.

Yet while Matherne claims that Imelda approved of *Ugnayan* because of her goal to unite the common people, in actuality, Imelda appeared aware that such lofty aspirations were subject to conditions beyond her control. Orosa further noted in her review that while “*Ugnayan* reached the man on the street...this filled Mrs. Marcos, *Ugnayan*’s principal patron, with apprehension. She was launching, full-scale, a project that was too eclectic, esoteric in approach and, therefore, not likely to capture the common *tao*’s [people’s] imagination.”²⁰⁵ Despite her deep ambivalence about the project’s nation-building potential, Imelda endorsed the project anyway.²⁰⁶

The First Lady’s consistent support of “esoteric” and experimental performances and artworks, ones that might fail at forwarding the administration’s agenda, suggested that her interest in art and culture opened a possibility for it to operate outside sociopolitical concerns. *Ugnayan* encouraged people to assemble regardless of the laws against it, and allowed a composer to take command over twenty distinct radio stations after the government had commandeered mass media outlets such as radio. Whereas the cynic might insist that *Ugnayan* functioned as an example of the Marcoses’ insistent progressivism through the arts, I propose instead that it serves as another example of how Imelda’s desires of advancing the arts and maintaining centralized control of the Philippines were often at odds with each other.

²⁰⁴ Matherne, “Naming the Artist,” 84.

²⁰⁵ Rosalinda L. Orosa, “Ugnayan,” in Santos, *Tunugan*, 143.

²⁰⁶ Orosa, “Ugnayan,” 143.

CHAPTER II

Roberto Chabet: Lines and Surfaces

While Maceda's *Cassettes 100* served as the earliest deliberate citation of a Kaprow-inspired Happening at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, other artists active at the CCP also stretched performance art's capacity to blur the distinction between art and life for critical ends. For example, Roberto Chabet, Maceda's one-time collaborator for *Udlot-Udlot*,²⁰⁷ was notably described as "an artist of happenings" by art critic Benesa.²⁰⁸ Benesa referred to Chabet's performance at *Exhibition of Objects* in 1973 as a prime example of Chabet's penchant for provocation. During the opening night of the exhibition at the CCP, Chabet dramatically ripped apart *Contemporary Philippine Art*, a large tome documenting recent art history in the country.

Chabet later expressed that the performance, which he called *Tearing to Pieces*, occurred because he "did not think it was allowed then to say something negative about the book in the newspapers so what better way to comment on it."²⁰⁹ Chabet's allusion to "newspapers" seemed to refer to restrictions on free press under martial law that limited freedom of expression. Though

²⁰⁷ During the 1970s, Maceda composed two performances specifically sited at the CCP—*Cassettes 100* and *Udlot-Udlot*—which were performed in 1975 in the parking lot of the CCP as part of the *Third Asian Composers' League Conference* in Manila. *Udlot-Udlot* required participants to play simple instruments to create three distinct sound groups: the drone, mixed sounds, and voices, which somewhat limited participants based on ability. Chabet collaborated with Maceda *Udlot-Udlot* by designing location plan that went with the music, which consisted of placing ten groups in ten 4 x 4 meters squares arranged in a large circle in the large parking lot of the CCP. See "'Futurist' Composer Presents 'Udlot Udlot,'" in *Business Day*, October 16, 1975, 19; "Maceda's 'Udlot-Udlot' today at CCP Grounds," in *Daily Express*, October 16, 1975, 26.

²⁰⁸ Leonidas V. Benesa, "Chabet: Art As a Happening," *Philippine Daily Express*, circa 1970s, 21.

²⁰⁹ Marge Enriquez, "Fine Arts' Nutty Professor," *Business World*, May 18, 1988.

smaller in scale than *Cassettes 100, Tearing to Pieces* served as not only a method of criticism, but also as a demonstration of how performance art—with its close relationship to life—circulated information through gossip and hearsay despite dictatorial control of mass media.²¹⁰

While Benesa situated Chabet within a global practice of Happenings that had gone “out of fashion in the international art scene,” the title of his article, “Chabet: Art As Happening,” permitted a level of interpretative slippage. “Happening” in this case alluded not only to a form of performance art practice, but also suggested art under Chabet as lively or interesting, similar to how one describes a crowded venue as “happening.” Always a provocateur, Roberto Chabet Rodriguez played many roles in the art world during the late twentieth century. More known for his installations and as the father of Philippine conceptual art, happenings made up only a small part of Chabet’s artistic contributions.

Before becoming a fine arts professor at UP-Diliman for nearly thirty years, Chabet served as the Cultural Center of the Philippines’ inaugural Museum Director from 1968 to 1970. He had studied architecture at the University of Saint Tomas and taught at the university as a lecturer in the same subject before his CCP appointment.²¹¹ Despite his lack of formal art instruction, Chabet quickly became a fixture in the Manila art scene after he “barged” into Luz Gallery with a handful of his artwork in the early 1960s.²¹² Arturo Luz, the gallery’s proprietor and an established painter himself, stated that Chabet was the “one painter of talent” that Luz had

²¹⁰ This, as discussed later, largely backfired against Chabet, as his performance gave critical attention and controversy to *Contemporary Philippine Art* that generated public interest and intrigue.

²¹¹ Roberto Chabet, interview by Ringo Bunoan, June 14, 2008, Ortigas, transcript pg. 2, Chabet Archive, Lopez Museum Library and Archives, Manila, Philippines.

²¹² Cid Reyes, “Roberto Chabet,” in *Conversations on Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1989), 124.

found in the first few years of running the Gallery.²¹³ Luz had also been the one to advise the young Chabet to sign his work with his exotic sounding middle name lest he be mistaken for one of the many other Rodriguezes in the Philippine art scene.²¹⁴ Chabet frequently exhibited at Luz Gallery—one of the more reputable galleries of the period—and further cemented his position in the Philippine art world when he received the First Prize in painting at the Art Association of the Philippines 14th Annual Exhibition in 1961.²¹⁵

Imelda Marcos had appointed Chabet as the director of the art museum for her ambitious Cultural Center of the Philippines in December 1967.²¹⁶ As part of the appointment, Chabet received a Rockefeller Grant given to the institution to observe museum practices across America.²¹⁷ The Rockefeller Grant undoubtedly informed Chabet’s artistic consciousness as it permitted him travel extensively to observe contemporary practices throughout both continents.²¹⁸ Chabet also spent the summer of 1968 in Europe to attend the Milan Triennale,

²¹³ Manuel D. Duldulao, *Contemporary Philippine Art* (Manila: Vera-Reyes, 1972), 71.

²¹⁴ Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc, “The Eligibles,” *Philippine Panorama*, February 10, 1974, 10-11; Paul Stephen Lim, “Chabet,” *Chronicle Magazine*, June 27, 1964.

²¹⁵ Purita Kalaw-Ledesma and Amadis Ma. Guerrero, *The Struggle for Philippine Art* (Manila: Vera-Reyes, 1974), 189.

²¹⁶ A stand-alone art museum in the original CCP complex plans that—as noted in the first chapter—was never realized.

²¹⁷ The Rockefeller Grant was another prime example of American support for the Cultural Center of the Philippines. In January 1967, Imelda met with Porter A. McCray, who was the visiting director of the John D. Rockefeller III Fund in New York—a fund that Imelda knew supported the performing arts. The JDR III Fund awarded two grants to support staff development at the CCP: one to Chabet to “study museum procedures and organization in the United States, including administration, installation, handling registration, publications, and educational services”; the other to Alejandrino Hufana to study Art Librarianship at Columbia University to become the Chief Librarian at the CCP Art and Music Library. During an earlier visit to the United States in 1966, Imelda Marcos was also able to convince President Lyndon B. Johnson to provide U.S. Support for the CCP, which resulted in a \$28-million Special Fund for Education—\$3.5 million of it was allotted to the CCP. See Pedro R Nervasa, “The Cultural Center of the Philippines—Asia’s Mecca of the Arts,” *Business Chronicle*, May 31, 1970, 16–17.

²¹⁸ Roberto Chabet, Shop 6 interviews by Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Chabet Archive, Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong. In this interview, Chabet explained, “Another thing that’s important, you see, was I was in New York in New York in ’67-’68. This was the height of Pop Art, Minimal Art and Conceptual Art, so I got to see a lot of these. I was

Venice Biennale, and Kassel Documenta IV. In December that year, he returned to Europe after more time in North America and passed his last month in England. His American itinerary included major cities and cultural centers including New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles and Washington D.C., visiting the Brooklyn Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco Museum of Art, Art Institute of Chicago among others. Chabet also visited smaller cities such as Detroit, Mexico City, Santa Fe, and Phoenix to observe museum operations at more minor institutions.²¹⁹

During his time in New York, Chabet witnessed the ongoing installation of *Dada*, *Surrealism*, and *Their Heritage* at the Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition surveyed more than 300 works associated with Dada and Surrealism in the early 20th century, including a sampling of works that demonstrated the “artistic heritage of these movements.”²²⁰ In the exhibition, Chabet would have seen works like Duchamp’s *Bicycle Wheel* and *Bottle Rack*, Robert Rauschenberg’s *Bed* and Claes Oldenburg’s *Soft Typewriter*, among others. The visit to the Museum of Modern Art allowed Chabet to experience in person the continuing legacy of Dada, “anti-art” and the incorporation of quotidian things in fine art—a practice he continued in the Philippines upon his return. Like many artists in the 1960s, Chabet was also drawn towards American movements such as Pop Art, earthworks, minimalism, and post-minimalism, noting his particular indebtedness towards the latter two.²²¹ He cited Robert Rauschenberg, Eva Hesse,

exposed to this...But before that I was doing more conventional types of works. The trip I took sort of opened my eyes to these things and when I got home this is what I wanted to do.” (transcript pg. 4).

²¹⁹ For more about his Rockefeller Grant travels and agenda, see Asia Art Archive’s digital Chabet Archive under Cultural Center of the Philippines → 1967–1968 John D. Rockefeller Grant.

²²⁰ See <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/1884> under press release, pg. 1.

²²¹ Chabet interview, Ortigas, 2008, transcript pg. 19.

and Robert Smithson as artists of particular interest.²²² In 1973, Chabet also dedicated a series of new works exhibited at Luz Gallery to the memory of Eva Hesse, who had passed away in 1970.

After he returned to the Philippines, he resigned from the CCP in late 1970, just one year after the building officially opened to the public. Chabet had realized then that he had completed his three years of service—the minimum required by the Rockefeller Grant—and withdrew from his position at the earliest possible instance. Joy Dayrit, Chabet’s long-term companion and friend, wrote in her journal that Chabet had “written the letter of resignation, a letter I suppose he had been composing for the past two years. He sounded firm and sure about his resigning and I was...surprised.”²²³ In the same journal entry, Dayrit further expressed:

I respect Bobby for what he did. He let go of prestige and all the fringes that go with it simply because he did not believe in all that crap. What is being a director when you can’t say what you want or do what you really want to do. Bobby believes in his art and the only way to develop that art is to be by himself, thinking and answering only for and to himself.²²⁴

While Chabet’s resignation from the CCP relieved him of certain bureaucratic obligations, Chabet’s departure from the CCP did not end of his relationship with the institution. He remained affiliated with the CCP throughout the 1970s, even serving as an artist-in-residence under his successor, Raymundo Albano.

Though Chabet only served as the CCP’s Museum Director for a single year of exhibitions, he established early curatorial programs for the Center and its developmental

²²² Chabet interview, Ortigas, 2008, transcript pg. 19.

²²³ Joy Dayrit Journals, December 9, 1970. Ateneo Library of Women’s Writings (ALIWW), Envelope 1.1.

²²⁴ Dayrit, *Joy Dayrit Journals*, Envelope 1.1.

strategies, including the *Thirteen Artists* exhibition—a recognition that continues today at the CCP.²²⁵ As the Museum Director, he expanded support towards sculpture and experimental projects with exhibitions such as *Sculptures* and *Illumination*.²²⁶ The latter exhibition dealt with perception and served as “an investigation on the effects of light, lighted materials, light moving in time,” exemplifying the kind of conceptual impulses typical of the CCP.²²⁷ Shortly after his departure as Museum Director, Chabet became a fine arts professor at the University of the Philippines, where he advised countless students for nearly three decades. He also became the de facto leader of a group of loosely affiliated conceptual artists called *Shop 6*, which Chabet has cited as an “alternative” venue to the CCP.²²⁸ Despite quick resignation from the CCP, he and his students, including members of *Shop 6*, frequently exhibited at the Cultural Center during and after the Marcoses’ reign.

While critics and scholars considered Chabet and his affiliated band of conceptual artists deeply tied to the CCP and complicit with Imelda Marcos’ cultural agenda, such an interpretation fails to acknowledge that the regime did not operate as an impenetrable authoritarian power. As demonstrated by *Cassettes 100*, the Marcoses permitted inconsistencies to legitimate their

²²⁵ In an article titled “Developmental Art of the Philippines,” Albano connects the Cultural Center of the Philippines with the beginning of “developmental art” and notes that “‘developmental’ was an operative word given by our government and press to government projects for fast implementation. Activities that had the nature of being under fast-action plans....The implication of a fast-action learning method is similar to that of developmental art.” Albano notes that there were “three elements involved: the artists’ group, the audience and the CCP museum....As works of new artists become more complex, the Museum’s curatorial staff had to organize exhibits that would elicit response and establish a healthy rapport. The intricate trafficking of information and response had to be maintained at a high pace.” See Raymundo Albano, “Developmental Art of the Philippines,” *Philippine Supplement* 2, no. 4 (Jul–Aug 1981): 15.

²²⁶ Judy Sibayan (artist), in discussion with author, March 2015, expressed that Chabet emphatically did not like including painting at the CCP and that the best way to enter the CCP was by doing anything but painting.

²²⁷ Exhibition notes for *Illumination*, Documentation of Exhibitions, Main and Small Gallery (1970), Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

²²⁸ Chabet, interview, Ortigas, 2008, transcript pg. 22. In this interview, Chabet—referring to the members of *Shop 6*—stated, “...we wanted to...match the activities in the CCP. It (*Shop 6*) was an alternative to the CCP.”

position as a non-oppressive governing force. Among these contradictions included some freedom and experimentation in the arts—such as abstraction—to exhibit the regime’s cultural and personal sophistication to the world.²²⁹ As an artist working in the Philippines who thoroughly understood his position in that world, Chabet used the CCP and authoritarian support for the arts as a platform to relieve the Philippines of its prior anxiety to be both “Filipino” and “international.”²³⁰

The following chapter is neither a complete résumé of Chabet’s oeuvre, which would be impossible to do in one chapter, nor is it an attempt to examine all his contributions to the CCP. Instead, it focuses on a handful of specific works made shortly after Chabet’s return from the Rockefeller Grant as he began to incorporate found objects and indigenous materials to his art-making practice. While Chabet is often declared the father of Philippine conceptual art, this chapter examines how his foray into conceptual art began in part as a response to abstraction. Though Jonathan Beller argues in his essay that “the radical edge” of “the viscosity of visual abstraction...drives to a struggle that may indeed be continued,” he claims that the “radical edge of this work was sheared off in H.R.’s canonization by the Marcoses, just as the Marcoses utilized a nationalist progressive discourse for fascistic ends.”²³¹

Beginning in the 1970s, Chabet’s curatorial and artistic efforts freed abstraction—and Philippine modernism—from instrumentalization by the Marcoses (or any faction) through its

²²⁹ While the Marcoses were careful to control circulation of information through radio, press, assembly and other means, abstraction—and its open-endedness of form and meaning—seemed to antithetical to their desire for control.

²³⁰ In Chabet’s 1990s interview with Enriquez, in a response to her question about “Filipinism,” Chabet remarked “We took for granted that we were doing “Filipino art” in the context of where we were working...See, we were indifferent to all these issues because we knew we were Filipinos, local boy scouts.” In the same interview, he stated, “We were not trying to compete with the international art scene but we certainly find a great inspiration from international art” (transcript pg. 6).

²³¹ Jonathan Beller, “From Social Realism to the Specter of Abstraction: Conceptualizing the Visual Practices of H.R. Ocampo,” *Kritika Kultura* 5 (2004): 18–58.

inclusion of everyday materials and debris. Hidden in the aesthetic arrangements of Chabet and his followers were abject objects made to look aesthetically appealing to fulfill Imelda Marcos' agenda of beauty. Yet, while flat planes of interlocking garish painted colors (what Beller describes as "army camouflage")²³² make up much of Ocampo's abstraction, Chabet's "eccentric abstraction," made from pieces of rubber and mangrove branches purchased from the market, protrudes into the world and its local realities.²³³ His work engaged directly with contemporary global discourses, but his penchant for impermanent materials and exhibition practices evaded international circulation and comparison. Chabet put forth the consumption of art (and of the world) as reciprocal and fluctuating processes negotiated between the viewer and their surroundings based on sensorial processes in conflict with the rational, top-down control by the Marcoses.

Tearing Contemporary Art to Pieces at the CCP

In 1973, Chabet took to one of the CCP's small outdoor atriums with a copy of Manuel Duldulao's recently published *Contemporary Philippine Art*. He then proceeded strip out pages from the book's spine and shred them into pieces in a performance aptly titled *Tearing to Pieces*.²³⁴ Chabet performed *Tearing to Pieces* during the opening of *Exhibition of Objects*, an exhibition curated by Albano, Chabet's replacement at the CCP.²³⁵ Albano had initially joined

²³² Beller, "From Social Realism," 29.

²³³ Cid Reyes, "Solving the Riddle of Chabet's Sphinx," *Shopping and Entertainment Guide*, March 9, 1973, 3. The article reviews Chabet's *New Works* exhibition at Luz Gallery in 1973, referring to the works as "eccentric abstraction" after Lucy Lippard's coinage of the term to refer to what would later be called post-minimalism.

²³⁴ Or *Tearing into Pieces* depending on the source. While it was called *Tearing to Pieces* in exhibition notes, subsequent publications, such as Enriquez's "Nuttty Professor" article from 1988 refers to it as *Tearing into Pieces*.

²³⁵ Chabet's use of the CCP's atrium was not exceptional during the early 1970s. Artists such as Joe Bautista and Allan Rivera also used the atrium as an exhibition space. Bautista exhibited his sand and canvas installation on the

the museum division at the CCP under Chabet's tutelage and, although Chabet had expected him to resign after his departure, Albano took over the museum director position. There, he continued their shared proclivity towards conceptual practices.²³⁶ *Objects* was just one example of an exhibition at the CCP that advanced the agenda of experimentalism originating under Chabet's brief leadership.²³⁷ *Objects* included "examples of objects" described in Albano's curatorial notes as "diversions of painters and sculptors" and "extensions of their visual preoccupation."²³⁸ Artists who participated in the exhibition were mostly painters exploring the potential of object-making, including Lee Aguinaldo, an established painter who exhibited *Duchamp's Last Crap*, a work made from ceramic, wood, and cardboard. *Objects* took place in the CCP Small Gallery—a small, modest white cube gallery space immediately across from the aforementioned atrium.

Tearing to Pieces refers both to Chabet's initial action of tearing apart *Contemporary Philippine Art* and the pile of scraps overflowing from a trash bin exhibited during *Objects*. The work has usually been understood as a critique of the book's decided lack of academicism and a

ground of the atrium in the 1972 *Thirteen Artists* exhibition; Rivera also used the atrium when he expanded his initial installation—*Bedroom*—from the same *Thirteen Artists* exhibition in a solo exhibition in 1974. The exhibition, called *INSTALLATIONS* by Allen Rivera, consisted of large expanses of colored vinyl laid across the lawn.

²³⁶ Chabet, interview, Ortigas, 2008, transcript pg. 21. In this interview Chabet remarked, "I took Ray in. And then when I quit, I thought he'd also quit. But Ray also needed a steady job."

²³⁷ Exhibitions such as *Black*, *White* and the *Exhibition of Objects* in the Small Gallery of the CCP received attention for being centered around issues of art-making that included perception, materiality and space. They all took place in the Small Gallery. According to the CCP exhibition files, *Black*, for example, explored "the use of black as pigment or non-color" and was meant to "further the gap and to establish what a non-commercial gallery can do." The exhibition notes marked that the "Small Gallery Guest Book became colorful. Wild reactions offset calm expectation." In his curatorial notes for *Objects*, Albano describes the "objects" in the exhibition as "diversions of painters and sculptors" and "extensions of their visual preoccupation." Objects operated at the periphery of established forms of art in the Philippines, which, at the time, was primarily painting and sculpture (but particularly painting). Albano further notes that objects operated in the realm of the senses—that their resemblance to the everyday created the potential for its viewer to feel sensations, tactile and otherwise, that matched with those that existed beyond the gallery walls. These objects, Albano also observes, were "sculptural, but unlike sculpture they create no environment nor exceed their height to monumental proportions."

²³⁸ Exhibition notes for *Exhibition of Objects*, Documentation of Exhibitions, Small Gallery (1973), Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

rejection of its contents.²³⁹ Excluding the introduction, the book is divided into ten short chapters that cover the beginning of Philippine modernism with discussion of the Philippine Art Gallery and the Art Association of the Philippines. It covers capsule histories of other emerging galleries such as Luz Gallery, the Contemporary Artists Gallery, Gallery Seven, Solidaridad, Galerie Bleue, and the Hidalgo Art Gallery. Central chapters cover critiques of artists such as H.R. Ocampo, Vicente Manansala, Arturo Luz, and Fernando Zobel—artists responsible for the “triumph of the New Style in the Philippines.”²⁴⁰ Chapter seven begins to discuss print-making and introduces Chabet and the last three chapters examine art from the mid-1960s onwards with particular focus on Imelda Marcos and the inauguration of the CCP.

In an interview with Duldulao, Cid Reyes stated that despite its “tremendous success and acceptance by a public once hostile and indifferent to Philippine art,” those in the art world met *Contemporary Philippine Art* with derision because it was not “scholarly enough” and relied “largely on press releases and articles, even gossip items.”²⁴¹ Artists further expressed offense that an outsider—someone who had previously worked in advertisement—created an entire historical tome about them, the first one to be published in the Philippines. Chabet, for example, later criticized Duldulao because he “actually never went to the exhibitions or openings,” though

²³⁹ Cid Reyes, “Manuel Duldulao,” in *Conversations on Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1989), 127-134. In his interview with Duldulao, Reyes noted that *Contemporary Philippine Art* had been criticized for not being “scholarly enough.” (128) He called *Tearing to Pieces* “not a very flattering review” of Duldulao’s book. (129). See also Leonidas V. Benesa, “A Review of Duldulao’s *Philippine Contemporary Art*,” FOCUS Philippines, February 3, 1973, 18–21. Benesa criticizes Duldulao’s use of “secondary sources...without direct acknowledgement” (20). He further acknowledges, “With the proper footnotes, the book would have gained the added distinction of being a work of solid and serious scholarship. But then this would have clashed with the tone of other sections of the book in which Duldulao purveys artistic gossip in unabashed journalese.” (21)

²⁴⁰ Benesa, “A Review of Duldulao’s *Philippine Contemporary Art*,” 20.

²⁴¹ Benesa, “A Review of Duldulao’s *Philippine Contemporary Art*,” 20.

the latter claimed otherwise.²⁴² Local criticism from the art world did not perturb Duldulao however, as he explicitly acknowledged that he had written *Contemporary Philippine Art* for an international audience.²⁴³ He expressed that the book was not intended for the “erudite elite” but rather “for an American friend curious to know about Philippine art.”²⁴⁴ His aspiration for international circulation and recognition mirrored the desire of Filipino artists exhibiting in major international biennials in the 1960s.²⁴⁵

As recognition for his contribution to the arts, Duldulao earned a Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) award in art in 1972—the same year he published *Contemporary Philippine Art*—as the first non-artist recipient. The book, much like *The Struggle for Philippine Art* published that same year, chronicled the “vital span of years from 1950 to the present,” which, according to Duldulao, “saw modern art rise from jeer to cheer.”²⁴⁶ *Contemporary Philippine Art* covers art making from the conception of the Philippine Art Gallery (PAG) to the international biennials of the 1960s to the newly minted Cultural Center of the Philippines. The text follows a relatively teleological understanding of modernism that mimicked the West as it progressed from romantic figuration to pure abstraction or “non-objective” art in the Philippines. *Tearing to Pieces* not only served as Chabet’s rejection of modernism as necessarily teleological (“from jeer to cheer”),

²⁴² Chabet, interview, Ortigas, 2008, transcript pg. 24. Yet, during Duldulao’s interview with Reyes in *Conversations on Philippine Art*, Duldulao claimed, “I never missed a major exhibition” (128).

²⁴³ Reyes, “Manuel Duldulao,” 128. Benesa also derisively criticizes Duldulao’s aspirations for international circulation in his review. Benesa expresses that the book suffers from “careless editing, if not careless writing,” which he considers embarrassing because “the book has been obviously packaged to suit international tastes and would therefore reflect on writing as a whole in this country” (18).

²⁴⁴ Reyes, “Manuel Duldulao,” 129.

²⁴⁵ He conceived the manuscript after his exposure to several art books—including one on Japanese art—from the United States. Duldulao remarked, “This [Japanese] book made me quite anxious. Imagine, here I was reading about the art of other countries in the world, while the rest of the world had no idea at all that the Philippines is creating probably the most exciting art in the Far East!” In Reyes, “Manuel Duldulao,” 128.

²⁴⁶ Duldulao, *Contemporary Philippine Art*, 11.

but also engaged directly with the contemporary politics of the Philippines by circumventing constraints placed on the freedom of press.²⁴⁷

Yolanda Johnson (then Laudico), one of the initial members of *Shop 6*, documented Chabet's performance of *Tearing to Pieces* in a series of color and black-and-white photographs. **[fig. 2.1]** In the first photograph, Chabet begins by presenting an intact copy of *Contemporary Philippine Art* squarely in front of his torso. His body replaces the display function of the low pedestal behind him; his hands carefully cradle the book's edges like a bookstand. His expression appears rather deadpan and humorless. He wears an unremarkable yellow t-shirt, loose pressed slacks, and black footwear—nothing that diverges from everyday clothing. Though the grayish text of the title fades into the book's white cover, a circular detail of H.R. Ocampo's *Song For April* renders the overall book familiar. Finally, a grayish gallery wall and three overhead lights backdrop Chabet; this is the only photograph of the artist and the book inside the gallery during *Tearing to Pieces* documented in the Chabet Archive.²⁴⁸

In the subsequent photographs, Chabet has removed the book from the familiar space of the art gallery. Chabet performs the majority of *Tearing to Pieces* in the atrium, an open-air rectangular plot enclosed on all sides with windows opening into the CCP's fourth floor hallways. Though the atrium literally occupies a space outside of the building, it technically

²⁴⁷ See Tom Walsh, "Martial Law in the Philippines: A Research Guide and Working Bibliography," *Southeast Asia Paper No. 4* from the Center for Southeast Asian Studies School Hawaiian, Asian, and Pacific Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa, 1973 for more information on restraint put on periodicals and publications available under Marcos' martial law. Several major daily broadsheets, such as the Manila Times, the Manila Chronicle, Philippine Free Press and others stopped publication during the period. Manila Times and Manila Chronicle resumed shortly after Cory Aquino took over as president. Upon reinstatement, Manila Chronicle ran a two-part article (see Lorna Kalaw-Tirol, "The Manila Chronicle Story," *Manila Chronicle*, June 12, 1986, 7; Lorna Kalaw-Tirol, "The Manila Chronicle Story," *Manila Chronicle*, June 13, 1986.) that discussed the seizure of their offices under martial law. Chabet's claim is a bit facetious though, as Benesa was able to write a rather critical review of the book.

²⁴⁸ There are two Chabet archives: one at Lopez Museum Library and Archives in Manila, Philippines and another at Asia Art Archive in Hong Kong. Much of the Chabet Archive at Asia Art Archive has been digitized, including Laudico's photographs of *Tearing to Pieces* found under the *Objects* folder in *Group Exhibitions*. At the time of this writing, however, the digital Chabet Archive appears to be down for updates.

remains part of institutional control because of its location in the heart of the CCP. Chabet chooses this ambivalent space—one that is simultaneously physically embedded within and outside of the institution, a position that metaphorically matches his own vis-à-vis the CCP—for *Tearing to Pieces*. Not only does he remove the book from its honored spot on the elevated pedestal, but he casually sets it directly on the grass in the atrium. No longer an object of veneration, the book becomes a mere thing implanted into the realm of the everyday, a symbolic gesture towards the current shift in Philippine contemporary art. Yet, the chosen space for the performance seems to mark art's transition from institution to the everyday as ambivalent and artificial since an atrium is a space that exists because of the building that surrounds it.

After setting the book on the ground, Chabet kneels behind the book as if it were an offering or a sacrifice of some sort. [fig. 2.2–2.3] He extends his body into a yogic headstand with his face looking away from *Contemporary Philippine Art*. By upending himself, the book, which was once at his feet, is now close to his head, suggesting that its position—physically and metaphorically—is necessarily mediated through human interaction. His inversion also foreshadows the presence of bodily exertion throughout *Tearing to Pieces*, highlighting art as a product of the artist's physical effort. [fig. 2.4] Chabet then carefully lowers himself and casually rifles through the book's pages—a gesture that mimics reading. Instead of reading the text, however, he proceeds to deliberately rip apart the glossy pages of Duldulao's art historical opus. He takes the act of reading, a mode of intellectual consumption, and substitutes destruction as another method of expenditure. As part of his procedure, Chabet forcefully presses the palm of one hand against a page of the book and then pulls its edge with his other hand; his action

indicates thought and deliberation to how the paper comes apart—a process similar to constructing collages.²⁴⁹

In other photographs, Chabet has changed into another nondescript shirt—this time blue instead of yellow. [fig. 2.5] After this minor wardrobe adjustment, Chabet performs another leisurely yogic inversion as he raises himself into a shoulder stand against the outer spine of *Contemporary Philippine Art*. The book had been left open with its pages splayed on the grass, a position that might allude to the presence of an absent-minded reader. [fig. 2.6] A lone female figure, most likely Dayrit, casually leans against the atrium’s glass wall and watches as Chabet tears apart the pages of *Contemporary Philippine Art*. [fig. 2.7] Though one photograph appears to show Dayrit gingerly moving one of the pieces from the book, she largely serves as a passive observer during *Tearing to Pieces*. Unlike Chabet, who Laudico photographed in a range of active poses, Dayrit either leans against the glass window or sits cross-legged, weighed down by her daily possessions, including a transparent vinyl “Piti Paty” tote and a black knitted purse. She makes little attempt to physically participate in Chabet’s book tearing effort, appearing in the photographs as a bystander to Chabet’s process. Her ultimate inclusion as one of the makers of *Tearing to Pieces*, however, indicates that even in this passive role of observance, she, as spectator, is still considered an author of *Tearing to Pieces*.²⁵⁰ While Dayrit is the only other figure besides Chabet seen in the atrium, glimpses of other spectators watching from inside the CCP are also visible behind the dark windows.

²⁴⁹ A gesture that is not lost to Benesa, as he observes in “Chabet: Art As a Happening” that an exhibition of collages “should recall [Chabet’s] book-tearing act somewhat.”

²⁵⁰ List of Objects for *Exhibition of Objects*, Documentation of Exhibitions, Small Gallery (1973), Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives. The list enumerates Joy Dayrit, Roberto Chabet, and Yolanda Laudico (who photographed the performance) as collaborators for *Tearing to Pieces*.

[fig. 2.8] Chabet changes his shirt one last time; one photograph shows Chabet tugging on a plain red shirt similar to his previous two.²⁵¹ After Chabet changes into the red shirt, he shifts to a more active position behind the book as he prepares for the end of *Tearing to Pieces*. While the prior photographs show Chabet kneeling on both knees (even when he dramatically throws a fistful of paper pieces against a window), he now kneels on only one knee—a position that allows for greater mobility. [fig. 2.9] His other foot steps on the book to hold it in place as he continues to deliberately remove pages from the hardcover. [fig. 2.10] As Chabet finishes tearing out the last pages of the book—some with his teeth—he throws the pages against the one side of the atrium’s glass window, the only side that has a sheer curtain.

Towards the end of *Tearing to Pieces*, the photographs shift from color to black-and-white. Though bits of bounded pages are still seen in these last photographs, *Contemporary Philippine Art* has mostly been stripped of its pages. [fig. 2.11] Chabet then rips apart its black hardcover, gleefully brandishing the book’s spine, emblazoned with its title, for public scrutiny. Since he had thrown the pages against the windowed atrium throughout the performance, a pile of torn paper gathers along one side of the space. [fig. 2.12–2.14] In the last photographs documenting *Tearing to Pieces*, Chabet is shown wildly mixing the torn pages with his arms. He faceplants onto the pile of scraps, pretending to pass out from the physical exertion of the performance. One of the final black and white photographs shows Chabet as he poses himself casually atop of the torn pages, his previously deadpan expression replaced with a satisfied Cheshire grin.

²⁵¹ During Chabet’s 2008 interview in Ortigas, Chabet noted that he was changing into “a Crispa shirt. You know, the original Crispa shirts. I was choosing that because I would get that free from Crispa” (transcript p. 28). I have often wondered whether Chabet’s decision to wear the three primary colors during *Tearing to Pieces* was a reference to Aleksandr Rodchenko’s *Pure Red Color*, *Pure Yellow Color*, *Pure Blue Color* (1921). Rodchenko writes, “I reduced painting to its logical conclusion and exhibited three canvases: red, blue, and yellow. I affirmed: it’s all over.” In 1984, Chabet held an exhibition entitled *Russian Paintings* at Luz Gallery, referencing Vladimir Tatlin and other Russian Constructivists, so he did incorporate Russian constructivism in his artworks later.

According to Duldulao's account of Chabet's performance in *The Philippine Art Scene*, another book he published in 1977, the performance ended with Chabet "pouring...the scraps from a paper bag into a wastebasket in view of the attendees."²⁵² Photographic documentation of the performance in the Chabet Archive, however, concludes the performance in the atrium. [fig. 2.15] A list of artworks from *Objects* exhibition files does identify an object exhibited as *Tearing to Pieces*; a corresponding black and white photograph shows a small pile of paper scraps—remnants of Duldulao's book—next to a small rubbish bin. The exhibition list identifies the work's medium as "(artists specified medium, 'Philippine Contemporary Art') waste basket, torn pieces of book" and credits the object to Chabet, Dayrit and Laudico. This identification demonstrates the importance of textually ascribing the "torn pieces of book" to Duldulao's oeuvre.²⁵³ Since Chabet had rendered the displayed pieces relatively illegible, comprehending *Tearing to Pieces* hinged on the belief that the tattered bits of paper were indeed from Chabet's earlier performance.

Though Reyes compared *Tearing to Pieces* to a "Savonarola-inspired book-burning gesture," the act of tearing rather than burning meant that there were pieces of legible text left after the performance.²⁵⁴ Photographs from *Tearing to Pieces*, many of them shot in close frame to Chabet's body, clearly document Chabet's deliberate and self-conscious method of destruction as one that purposely left pieces of the book behind.²⁵⁵ In one photograph, for example, Chabet obscures his face as he presents a single page to the camera. His hands hold the top of the page

²⁵² Manuel Duldulao, *The Philippine Art Scene* (Manila: Mabey, 1977), 155.

²⁵³ The list of objects for the exhibition omitted the author of the book.

²⁵⁴ Reyes, "Manuel Duldulao," 129.

²⁵⁵ See Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism Since the French Revolution* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997) for more information on destruction in modern art history.

as if he is about to rip it in half, which, following other photographs, he most likely did after this picture was taken. Underneath him and at his knees are other pages that have been ripped apart or are waiting to be ripped apart.

Through this presentation, Chabet indicates the importance of his destructive methods. Instead of setting the book on fire or drenching the pages in dark liquid to render its text indecipherable, Chabet chose a form of destruction that left bits of the book's text readable, even though the viewer might not immediately identify the book itself. The destructive act of tearing was also a generative one as the pieces from the performance were used to produce an object—the overflowing trash bin—for *Exhibition of Objects*. While some of the words and images remain readable on the scraps of paper, Chabet obscured the narrative expounded in the original by mixing the pieces in random configuration. **[fig. 2.16]** A black and white photograph documenting a pile of pages left on the grass during his performance—the only photograph to not include Chabet—includes the front cover of *Contemporary Philippine Art*, whole and untorn, like a fallen general with his soldiers.

By leaving remnants of Duldulao's book displayed and identified in *Objects, Tearing to Pieces* was not about destruction or even criticism, but rather the generation of conversation around the text and the book's modernist narrative—one that also implicated Chabet, who Duldulao included in *Contemporary Philippine Art*.²⁵⁶ Duldulao further embraced his first book's prominent position in Philippine performance art in his following manuscript, *The Philippine Art Scene*. There, he smugly reported that “with the help of the mass media and in spite of Chabet's opinion, or perhaps partly because of it...a thousand copies of *Contemporary*

²⁵⁶ Duldulao, *Contemporary Philippine Art*, 71-72.

Philippine Art were sold in exactly ten days.”²⁵⁷ Chabet also acknowledged that *Tearing to Pieces* brought attention to *Contemporary Philippine Painting* in a way that contributed to its sales.²⁵⁸

While *Tearing to Pieces* did not impede the success of *Contemporary Philippine Art* through its criticism, Chabet’s performance served a different purpose. *Tearing to Pieces* picked at Duldulao’s desire—similar to Imelda’s—to create an easily consumable and digestible history of contemporary Philippine art catered toward an international audience. It drew local attention to Philippine art through hearsay and conversation, attention that resonated through the years in later interviews with Chabet and Duldulao.²⁵⁹ *Tearing to Pieces* also revealed how Imelda Marcos’ support for avant-garde and experimental practices allowed for legible and “shocking” acts that permitted circulation of thoughts, ideas, and criticism in a regime that otherwise kept tight control over the dissemination of information.²⁶⁰ As experimental performances helped to prove the regime’s tolerance and desire for creative innovation, Chabet was able to use the CCP as a platform to express his discontent and create intrigue around art and its history as it emerged in the Philippines. *Tearing to Pieces* seemed to have real life repercussions as it increased sales and general public interest in art. In placing the performance in the CCP’s atrium, Chabet also seemed to recognize his own implication within the CCP and its structures despite his attempt to operate outside of it—literally and figuratively.

²⁵⁷ Duldulao, *The Philippine Art Scene*, 155.

²⁵⁸ In an interview in the 2000s, while discussing *Tearing to Pieces*, Chabet exclaims, “Shucks! I tore it up! And then you know [Duldulao] took advantage of the situation. I did him a favor...So when his books came out, you know there was a picture of that event. It was very funny.” Chabet, Interview, Ortigas, 2008, transcript pg. 24.

²⁵⁹ Covered in many interviews with Chabet, including Enriquez’s “Nutty Professor” and Bunoan’s Ortigas interview in 2008.

²⁶⁰ In *Contemporary Philippine Art*, Imelda Marcos states to writer Nick Joaquin, “I like modern art. I like the abstract...I like them because they get me to thinking...I like things that I do not understand because they make me curious” (88).

***New Works* Exhibition (Tribute to Eva Hesse)**

Shortly after *Tearing to Pieces*, Chabet held a solo exhibition at Luz Gallery in February 1973 called *New Works* or *For E.H.* Chabet intended the exhibition to be a tribute to Eva Hesse, an artist Chabet held in high regard, after her passing in 1970. Nathaniel Gutierrez, the same photographer who documented *Cassettes 100*, captured the black and white photographs for this exhibition. Most of Chabet's work displayed in *New Works* include thick, boxy black or white plywood frames with pieces of rubber repurposed from the interior tubes of tires stretched across the frames in assorted horizontal arrangements. Chabet's choice of rubber reflected Hesse's own penchant for industrial and every-day materials; their configuration recalls the sensuousness of the body reminiscent of Hesse's later installations. Many of the boxes, such as *Kite Traps*, were treated like paintings and placed flushed against the gallery's white wall, while others hung like a line of mobiles from the ceiling. Chabet also placed black plywood boxes filled with tire bits on the floor of the gallery.

In a positive review of *New Works*, Reyes identified Chabet's simple plywood and rubber constructions as extending from "post-minimalism" from "the art-historical viewpoint" and "eccentric abstraction" according to Lucy Lippard.²⁶¹ The works in *For E.H.* engaged with post-minimalist strategies such as seriality (following their minimalist predecessors), the exploration of unprocessed materials, and a greater emphasis on sensuality and corporeality.²⁶² Reyes described Chabet's work as a "lush metronomical arrangement of rubber strips" that had a

²⁶¹ Reyes, "Solving the Riddle of Chabet's Sphinx," 3.

²⁶² Lucy Lippard, "Eccentric Abstraction," in *Changing in Essays in Art Criticism* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co, 1971); Robert Pincus-Witten, *Postminimalism* (New York: Out of London Press, 1977).

“gawky, disconcerting elegance.”²⁶³ However, Reyes further noted that Chabet’s work might also be considered “art of the ugly” to the “universal audience” as “there were repressed giggles” from local attendees who were “somewhat dumbfounded” and “saw something they were not used to seeing.”²⁶⁴ For a local Philippine audience, Reyes implied that these objects would be more familiar in a garage rather than a gallery.²⁶⁵

Chabet had previously used tires in a one-night installation at Dayrit’s Print Gallery in May 1970 with a group of artists called The Liwayway Recapping Co. The exhibition—Chabet’s brainchild according to Dayrit—consisted of “an exhibit of objects” that included “tires, black balloons, mirrors, strips of colored paper, a shadow” and so forth.²⁶⁶ Chabet’s collaborators for Liwayway included Albano, Rodolfo Gan, and Boy Perez. The exhibition took place in the evening and lasted only four hours. **[fig. 2.17]** The photographs documenting the exhibition include a number of what appears to be painted white inner tubes dangling from the ceiling and accumulations of round black balloons floating low to the ground. The balloons are strange given that their strings appear too short, causing them to just hover over the ground rather than fulfill their function as balloons. The white inner tubes hover in different angles throughout Print Gallery and resemble giant blood cells circulating through the gallery space.

[fig. 2.18] This odd assortment of hanging and floating objects in the exhibition recall some of Hesse’s own work, particularly a photograph of her studio in 1966 that also shows an assortment of dangling things, including a dark inner tube that hangs at the end of a rope. One of

²⁶³ Reyes, “Solving the Riddle of Chabet’s Sphinx,” 3.

²⁶⁴ Reyes, “Solving the Riddle of Chabet’s Sphinx,” 3.

²⁶⁵ Reyes, “Solving the Riddle of Chabet’s Sphinx,” 3.

²⁶⁶ Joy Dayrit Journals, June 1, 1970, Joy Dayrit Archives, Ateneo Library of Women’s Writings (ALIWW), Envelope 1.1.

the objects next to it appears to be Hesse's *Vertiginous Detour*, which comprises an acrylic and polyurethane on papier-mâché ball encased in a net at the end of another rope. The perceived weight of the ball pulls it downwards as many smaller pieces of rope attached to the net begin to tickle at the ground like octopus tentacles. The full roundness of the ball that pulls at the slack of the net also makes it *feel* like an organism rather than a thing. Like Hesse, Chabet experimented with the unexpected manipulation of materials to draw attention to the corporeal.

A scrapbook of the exhibition in Dayrit's archives specifies that The Liwayway Recapping Co. "has no assets, no ambitions, no funds, makes no profits, and therefore pays no taxes."²⁶⁷ She implies that the artists chose to operate outside of the financial and thus political concerns—such as paying taxes and supporting government ventures—associated with art-making.²⁶⁸ Using found or donated materials further allowed them to do so as they avoided paying a hefty price on paint.²⁶⁹ The text in the scrapbook directly addresses the reader as it acknowledges the exhibition photographs as a mediated experience, stating, "For those of you who missed the direct experience of this exhibition, these pictures are for you to look at... You won't feel the same sensation we felt when we experienced the exhibition as a whole that evening."²⁷⁰ The text implies that a significant part of the installation depended on the direct bodily engagement with the exhibition, which had only been up for four hours. Temporality, as

²⁶⁷ Liwayway Scrapbook, Joy Dayrit Archives, Ateneo Library of Women's Writings (ALIWW).

²⁶⁸ Liwayway Scrapbook, Joy Dayrit Archives, Ateneo Library of Women's Writings (ALIWW).

²⁶⁹ Alfredo R. Roces, "CB Curbs on Artists," *The Times Journal*, May 18, 1969. In this edition of his *Light and Shadow* column, painter Alfredo R. Roces noted that "artist's and student's colors now fall under NEC 533-0301 Central Bank Commodity Classification so that the time deposit required is 150 percent. We believe that these items should be regarded as raw materials which artists transform into works of art, and merit tax exemption." He further suggests that the new Cultural Center could import paint for local artists at cost price. He argues, "Providing artists with the diversity of modern art materials is one such essential step. Art materials should be made available to local artists as cheaply as possible."

²⁷⁰ Liwayway Scrapbook, Joy Dayrit Archives, Ateneo Library of Women's Writings (ALIWW).

we will see again with Shop 6, or the quick overturn of exhibitions permitted artists to elude top-down control of their practice as shows were quickly disbanded.

[fig. 2.19] Similar images could be seen for an exhibition curated by Chabet at the CCP in 1970 called *Illuminations*, also by the Liwayway Recapping Co. The exhibition was “an investigation on the effects of light, lighted materials, and light moving in time” that included equipment such as projectors, spotlights, black lights, suspended mirrors, suspended pieces of aluminum, foam rubber, and interior tires—a mixture of opaque and reflective materials that produced instability.²⁷¹ The bits of aluminum and the mirror reflect the viewer and his surroundings, incorporating the viewer’s own body into the installation. According to sketches of *Illumination*, we also find that the “interior tires,” which appear white in photographs, were actually painted pink, or more precisely, “flesh with blush.”²⁷²

Recorded music played throughout the one-week installation included contemporary rock bands such as the Rolling Stones, Santana, and Yes, as well as “avant-garde works” by Xenakis, Mimaroglu, John Cage, and Varese—composers from whom Maceda had also drawn inspiration. In addition to this mix of rock and avant-garde music, a “soundtrack of water leaks and flashbombs” also played during *Illuminations*, which coincidentally occurred during a typhoon in Manila.²⁷³ Not only did *Illuminations* include music by composers interested in using sounds from the everyday; it also included noises that corresponded to the weather outside the CCP. *Illuminations* seemed to be more than just an experimentation of light, but also a visual and sonic exploration of how art operated in and interacted with the world around it.

²⁷¹ Exhibition notes for *Illumination*, Documentation of Exhibitions, Main and Small Gallery (1970), Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

²⁷² Floor plan of *Illumination*, Documentation of Exhibitions, Main and Small Gallery (1970), Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

²⁷³ Exhibition notes for *Illumination*.

The 1970 exhibition at Print Gallery and *Illuminations* were examples of Chabet's early efforts to use found materials shortly after he returned from his travels in the United States and Europe.²⁷⁴ In *New Works*, however, the interior tire tube, which had once been left whole and merely painted, has been slashed and stretched by Chabet, who exploited and displayed its material properties. Similar to *Tearing to Pieces*, many of Chabet's works in *New Works* have an undertone of violence. In nearly all of the works, strips of tattered rubber are speared on hooks and pulled across frames. They resemble hide or leather that has been stretched to create a taut surface, recalling the corporeality of the body. The uneven edges and imprecise size of the varying strips seem to allude to their status as the effects of destruction—like the pieces of black rubber left on the road after a tire has blown out—that have been recuperated into new form

While the majority of the rubber strips were stretched across the empty expanse at the center of Chabet's constructed plywood frames, creating the illusion of surface, shorter pieces pierced between two hooks generate irregular grids on the surface of black painted plywood. These create an uncomfortably textured, uneven surface. With many of the works shown in *New Works*, Chabet experimented with unconventional, repurposed materials to explore the instability of line and surface that refused the rigid order of Minimalism and the modernist vision of Marcos's New Society. Through his technique of piercing of stretching his materials over sharp metal hooks, Chabet, like Hesse, also called attention to bodily presence—his own and the viewer's—for its potential to disturb the fantasy of abstraction as “a universal language transcending all boundaries of nation, state, class, and gender.”²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ Chabet had been involved with Dayrit's Print Gallery since he returned from his Rockefeller grant. In a 1990s interview with Francesca Enriquez, Chabet noted that one of the starts of experimental art occurred in Joy Dayrit's Print Gallery in 1969, “where artists got writings from writers” (transcript pg. 4).

²⁷⁵ Benjamin Buchloh, “Hesse's Endgame: Facing the Diagram,” in *Eva Hesse Drawing* edited by Catherine d Zegher (New York: The Drawing Center/Yale University Press, 2006), 119.

[fig. 2.20–2.21] Black square and rectangular plywood frames filled with rows of black rubber strips comprise *Kite Traps*, one of the series in the exhibition. Like conventional paintings, these works were also hung flush against the wall, rendering them incapable of actually trapping the kites purported by their title. They vary size and arrangement; while some of the larger *Kite Traps* were exhibited as a single work on a wall, others were paired or arranged in grid-like formations. According to Reyes, Chabet described this particular series as “drawings”—perhaps due to their preoccupation with the iteration of line.²⁷⁶ All of the *Kite Traps* incorporate strips of industrial rubber stretched across a plywood frame to make multiple horizontal black lines. Each end of the rubber strips was pierced through small metal hooks attached to the inside of the plywood box. Their close proximity creates an illusion of a surface that has been carefully slashed multiple times.

Chabet might have called this particular series “drawings” not only due to their preoccupation with line, but because they, like drawings, rely on laborious and continuous acts to produce a work. Writing about Chabet, Bunoan expresses, “He said at one point he would make as much as a hundred drawings each day.... He explained that drawing is not so much about a finished picture, but is a continuous process of making marks. The mark becomes a line, the line becomes a shape, the shape becomes an image, and the image becomes a memory of what was once a mark.”²⁷⁷ Chabet later implied that he had obtained some of the materials for the exhibition from “a re-tiring company or something for tires” in return for a free tour of the CCP.²⁷⁸ The black strips stretched through the frame in *Kite Traps* correspond with Chabet’s

²⁷⁶ Reyes, “Solving the Riddle of Chabet’s Sphinx,” 3.

²⁷⁷ Ringo Bunoan, “Seeing and Unseeing: The Works of Roberto Chabet,” in *Roberto Chabet* edited by Ringo Bunoan (Manila: King Kong Art Projects Unlimited, 2015), 72.

²⁷⁸ Roberto Chabet and Joy Dayrit, interview by Ringo Bunoan, July 3, 2008, Dayrit’s house, transcript pg. 7, Chabet Archive, Lopez Museum Library and Archives, Manila, Philippines.

claim that they had come from tire tubes as they bubble and pull in a manner consistent with the attempt to straighten rubber from the rounded inner tubing of tires. In repurposing rubber tires that refuse to unfurl into absolute and perfect straight lines, Chabet used an imperfect material that inherently fails to do the thing he desired as he tried to pull and pierce it into submission. Despite Chabet's effort to stretch the black rubber strips into iterated parallel lines, excess flaps of rubber stubbornly sag over each other, visually signaling the artist's lack of mastery over them.

The rubber strips in *Kite Traps* further exhibited their disobedience as stubborn lines as they drooped beyond the confinements of their frames, broaching into the real space of the gallery. In a set of these two rectangular vertically oriented "drawings," some of the pieces of rubber dangle carelessly outside of the plane created by the black painted plywood as a result of being too long, or simply too thick. The lines overlap haphazardly over the black frame and some even break the frame altogether, extending into the white wall. One of the lowermost strips drape over the bottom of the frame, its wavy bottom once again indicating that the strips have been stretched from obstinate tubes. Another set of *Kite Traps* shows one that has rubber caught between the frame and the wall, a bit of it peeking out from under the painted plywood. The black rubber in *Kite Traps* escapes the frame from all sides. Though Chabet could have easily cut off the excess bits of rubber, he allowed them instead to push outside of their confined spaces.

While Chabet permitted his materials to physically expand into the space of the viewer, his employment of quotidian materials already implied contiguity with the world outside; hence why local viewers might have found some of the works in the exhibition more appropriate for the garage rather than a gallery. The structure and size of the *Kite Traps* also recalls windows: the rubber strips resemble shutter slates that obscure the view of an open vitrine. The spaces between

the slates invite the viewer to peer through to glimpse at what might be concealed—in this case it is nothing more than awareness of the white wall. Staring long enough at *Kite Traps*, the viewer must acknowledge the lack of distinction between figure and ground as white wall and black rubber oscillate between fulfilling both functions, generating the sense of uncertainty present in viewing abstract works.

Chabet filled all but one of the *Kite Traps* with enough bands of black rubber that they resemble tattered black surfaces. [fig. 2.22] An arrangement of six square and identically sized *Kite Traps* placed in two rows of three included the only *Kite Trap* that differed in composition. Five of the works echo other *Kite Traps* as their thick rubber ribbons, despite varying in number and size, create an illusion of black surface. One frame at the top right of the configuration, however, has only one lone black band stretched across the expanse of white wall, dividing the composition at its center. While black seems to dominate the other works in *Kite Traps*, this work seems to emphasize the whiteness of the wall behind it, marking the wall as part of the work itself. The contrast of color between the wall and the single band permits the viewer to clearly see Chabet's method of making as the tension of the black rubber pierced onto the hook is more readily visible without the distraction of iteration. By understanding each stretched rubber strip as a single unit and not a mere emergence of messy surface, the viewer comprehends *Kite Traps* and drawing as the result of a repetitive, laborious process.

[fig. 2.23] *Sky Horizons*, another work in the exhibition, includes twelve identically sized white frames hung from the ceiling at even intervals with transparent wire or string. The distance between each frame is just enough to discourage the viewer from walking between them, suggesting that the work operates as a unit rather than a series of discrete parts. Like the abovementioned singular composition in *Kite Traps*, all of the frames in *Sky Horizons* include

only a single expanse of rubber horizontally stretched across two metal hooks, causing, as the title indicates, the impression of a horizon line. These pieces appear more irregular than those in *Kite Traps* as the rubber segments are thicker and seem to become more jagged towards the center of the frame. While the rubber pieces in *Kite Traps* casually poke out of their frames into the real space of the viewer, *Sky Horizons* seems to break free from the wall altogether as its frames determinedly occupy the space in the center of Luz Gallery.

Though Chabet used black for the other frames in the exhibition, he chose white for *Sky Horizons*, the only work that hung from the ceiling in *New Works*. While the black frames in *Kite Traps* demarcate difference between the wall and the work, the whiteness of these frames blurs the edges of *Sky Horizons* into the whiteness of the wall, accentuating its expansion into real space. Like the single line of rubber in *Kite Traps* that calls the viewer to recognize the wall as an imperative part of the work, the white frame commands attention to the wall, but in its sameness rather than difference. The whiteness of the frames further draws attention to the wall itself as part of the material contents to be viewed in *New Works*. The gallery and its white walls—adorned with Chabet’s other compositions—are absorbed into the multiple frames of *Sky Horizons* as they extend further and further away from the wall.

One frame, however, remains affixed to the wall at the end of the gallery. It hangs comfortably at an eye level, reminiscent of conventional painting. The remaining eleven frames hang parallel to the one on the wall, one after another in equal distances extending across the middle of the gallery. Despite the lack of footprint as it dangles in the air, *Sky Horizons* commands space in the gallery in similar fashion to sculpture as it demands the viewer to walk around it. The black rubber horizon on all the white frames are also placed at the same height as

each other, giving the line real depth—particularly if the viewer positions herself in line at one end of *Sky Horizons*.

In an article for the *Philippine Supplement* titled “Installations: A Case For Hangings,” Albano discusses installation as “a term to describe open sculpture or three-dimensional objects that depend on the physical situation of a given space.”²⁷⁹ He refers to installation as “a technical description of a work that needs or needed to be attached to the ceiling, wall or floor not unlike that of an electrical installation.”²⁸⁰ According to Albano, since “installations enabled artists to broaden their list of materials for art: sad, stones, bags, rubber tires, painted bread,” this form of artwork was “natural-born as against the alien intrusion of a two-dimensional western object like a painting.”²⁸¹ By attaching one part of *Sky Horizons* to the wall, Chabet emphasizes its relationship to painting; the affixed frame simultaneously anchors *Sky Horizons* to that wall but also articulates its emancipation from it.

While the gallery space and its contents complete the experience of work, *Sky Horizons* also hinges on its relationship with the viewer and the viewer’s bodily position, which Gutierrez attempted to capture by photographing the installation from various vantage points. [fig. 2.24] One photograph directly faces into the hollow center of the collective frames, flattening the experience of *Sky Horizons* into the two-dimensionality of painting. This experience is framed by the plywood box closest to us—within it, the rest of the frames and black horizon lines are visible. Though the frames are all physically the same size, the viewer experiences them as increasingly smaller as they recede into the wall, indicative of the shifting perception of things in space. The depth created by the repeated rubber horizon line evokes the illusion of painting as a

²⁷⁹ Ray Albano, “Installations: A Case for Hangings,” *Philippine Supplement*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Jan–Feb 1981, 2.

²⁸⁰ Albano, “Installations.”

²⁸¹ Albano, “Installations.”

window that recedes into another world. Yet, this time, the depth actually occurs in real space and the impression of this reality as illusionistic (and thus flattened painting) relies on the bodily movement of the viewer. Painting is not a surface onto which a reality has been projected, but rather on which surface is continually made and remade.

Gutierrez also photographed *Sky Horizons* from two other distinct perspectives—one of which encompasses all of the frames of the work receding to the last frame flushed on the wall. **[fig. 2.25]** This vantage point offers us the most comprehensive view of the various components of *Sky Horizons*; it permits us to see that the frames are the same size and evenly distributed. Unlike the flattened composition of the first photograph, this angle also emphasizes how much space *Sky Horizons* occupies in the gallery. While this perspective provides an absent viewer with the knowledge of how different parts of *Sky Horizons* operate together, another of Gutierrez's photographs only includes three of the farthest frames from the wall.

[fig. 2.26] In this photograph, *Sky Horizons* is not represented in its entirety, and it no longer appears as the central work. From this vantage point, the last white frame of *Sky Horizons* appears to border a large square of plain white plywood on the wall, its farthest right corner aligning perfectly with the square of plywood, projecting a strip of black rubber across its empty surface. The frame as a frame is demonstrated to be an always contingent thing that depends on the position of viewer and its relationship with the surrounding objects; the viewer's movement allows for alternate framings, including the importation of a spare landscape onto a blank board.

Affixed on and around the broad squares of plywood on the wall are small rectangular boxes with pieces of rubber tire stretched across them that resemble miniature, black-framed versions of *Sky Horizons*. The placement of these boxes in relation to the plywood feel strange and out of sync; they protrude beyond the edges of the white plywood onto the surface of the

white wall, suggesting the two to be interchangeable parts of the installation. [fig. 2.27] The shifting relationship of the small black boxes between the wall and the plywood suggests the nature of painting as one contingent, to some extent, on the size of the work in relation to its protrusion from the wall.

Following Hesse, who tended towards muted monochromes of beige, black, white, and gray, Chabet made all of the exhibited work black and white. [fig. 2.28] His one exception was *Pink Painting*, a lone painting constructed out of a large square of plywood and various colors of cut-up nylon stockings. Chabet departed from black and white with a color Briony Fer describes as the “meeting of flesh and commodities” for Hesse during the 1960s, a color that had deep significance to the artist before she “abandon[ed]” her use of color in 1965.²⁸² *Pink Painting* seems to be an homage to Hesse’s earlier experimentations with the color. The painting includes eight columns of nylon stockings cut into smaller tubes and stretched across rows of metal hooks. The even spacing of the metal hooks and the nylons pierced onto them result in a grid of varying gradations. Instead of the sharp lines that characterize the modernist grid, however, Chabet’s nylons droop over each other like lazy tongues, blending the distinct rows into fleshy columns. They expose the effort necessary to maintain the rigidity of the grid, a structure that Rosalind Krauss declares “emblematic of the modernist ambition within the visual arts.”²⁸³

²⁸² Briony Fer, “Eva Hesse and Color,” *October* 119 (2007): 22. Fer notes that Lippard referred to the pink in *Oomamaboomba* as a “whiplash of color” (25). Of the pink, Fer explains, “This is a color whose brightness can grate, as if it has a heightened pitch.” Fer also argues that Hesse’s “patches of pink” in her 1964 drawings and collages “reverberate with echoes of the pink fleshiness of de Kooning’s nudes” (26). These patches, however, “are themselves fairly starkly cut from the context and set to work in a new network of connections” (26).

²⁸³ Rosalind Krauss, “Grids,” *October* 9 (1979): 52. Krauss writes, “There are two ways in which the grid functions to declare the modernity of modern art. One is spatial; the other is temporal. In the spatial sense, the grid states the autonomy of the realm of art...In the temporal dimension, the grid is an emblem of modernity by being just that: the form that is ubiquitous in the art of *our* century, while appearing nowhere, nowhere at all, in the art of the last one...By “discovering” the grid, cubism, de Stijl, Mondrian, Malevich...landed in a place that was out of reach of everything that went before. Which is to day, they landed in the present, and everything else was declared to be the past” (50, 52).

Krauss argues in “Grids,” a seminal article published in *October* a few years after Chabet’s *New Works*, that the grid “functions to declare the modernity of modern art” in part because it “states the autonomy of the realm of art. Flattened, geometricized, ordered, it is antinatural, antimimetic, antireal.”²⁸⁴ On *Pink Painting*’s hook-laden surface, floppy bits of stubborn nylon index Chabet’s struggle with the grid’s ubiquity as a as an artist from the Philippines. *Pink Painting* acts as a failed grid—one that reveals the effort necessary to retain its integrity. The grid’s stringent denial of representation “announces, among other things, modern art’s will to silence, its hostility to literature, to narrative, to discourse...walling the visual arts into the realm of exclusive visuality and defending them against the intrusion of speech.”²⁸⁵ Yet, Chabet’s extraneous pieces of nylon—despite the attempt to aggressively affix them onto the plywood with pointed hooks—refuse flatness and the ease of the grid as they droop uncomfortably, some resembling gaping mouths or hanging tongues. Rather than engendering speech or narrative from others, *Pink Painting* looks as if it might speak for itself.

The pink in *Pink Painting* might refer to more than just color. Chabet’s use of re-purposed nylon stockings—an intimate piece of clothing tightly fitted to the female body—also generates the illusion of folds of flesh and skin, impressing upon the viewer its potential for vulgarity. While nylon stockings symbolize the commodification of feminine propriety, in its new form it also displays woman as mere commodity. The abstracted nylons of varying colors are stacked on top of each other like objects meant to be plucked off a shelf at a store. As a work of abstraction, *Pink Painting* exemplified how found materials, like stockings, and their real-

²⁸⁴ Rosalind Krauss, “Grids,” 50. Later in the article, Krauss verifies that the grid as “flattened” or “anti-real” as a conceit. She writes, “The grid’s mythic power is that it makes us able to think we are dealing with materialism (or sometimes science, or logic) while at the same time provides us with a release into belief (or illusion, or fiction)” (54). She cites how the structuralists use grid-like formations to arrange the “sequential features of a story” (55).

²⁸⁵ Krauss, “Grids,” 50.

world associations could evoke sexuality otherwise be forbidden by the legibility of figuration. The grid cannot control the plenitude of the body.

[fig. 2.29] For another work in *For E.H.*, untitled in the Chabet Archive, Chabet adapted the method used in *Pink Painting*—the methodical and incremental piercing of everyday fragments into a grid configuration—to pieces of slashed rubber inner tube. While delicate and supple pieces of nylons droop downwards due to gravitational pull, maintaining the small aisles between the columns of the grid, the buoyant rubber pieces splay away from their hooks in all directions, blending the columns and the rows together. Yet, the grid and its distinct units remain discernable, particularly towards the bottom of the composition where the rubber pieces seem to flare out less than the ones at the top. Since the opacity of the black rubber obstructs the view of the hooks to which they are attached, its resemblance to *Pink Painting*, made from transparent materials, permits the viewer to extrapolate this work’s construction. The bouncy rubber lends the composition an all-over tactile texture that feels almost plush, like a thick rug or a bathmat mistakenly mounted on a wall. Hung upright, the work juts out towards the viewer, enticing her to pet or pull at the protruding rubber parts—a gesture reminiscent of the artist’s initial tactile experience of pulling the pieces taut across the row of hooks to make the composition.

Lippard adapts the “psychological term ‘body ego’ or Bachelard’s ‘muscular consciousness’” to refer to “such mindless, near-visceral identification with form” that she identifies in works she describes as “eccentric abstraction.”²⁸⁶ She further explains, “Body ego can be experienced in two ways: first through appeal, the desire to caress, to be caught up in the feel and rhythms of a work; second through repulsion and immediate reaction against certain

²⁸⁶ Lucy Lippard, “Eccentric Abstraction,” in *Changing in Essays in Art Criticism* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co, 1971), 102.

forms and surfaces.”²⁸⁷ Chabet’s rubber grid might arouse the “desire to caress” the sumptuous accumulation of springy black rubber, just as his nylon one, with its semblance to stretched skin—skin flayed from the fleshy body—might cause repulsion.

While the somatic appears within the rubber grid through its sensuous appearance and the invocation to be caressed—that is to conjoin its body with viewer—*Pink Painting* impresses the physical fragility of the spectator’s own flesh. Touch *Pink Painting* and your hand, like the peach-colored nylons, might be pricked by the sharp metal hooks too. That was the risk—albeit a minor one—that Chabet took as he pulled nylon and rubber across each succession of metal hooks, again and again. The potential of punctured skin further draws attention to the presence of the artist’s body and its labor within the methodical construction of these grids. Chabet’s grids call attention to somatic gesture within the prescribed space of the “flattened...antinatural, antimimetic, antireal” grid.²⁸⁸

[fig. 2.30] In brief discussion of Hesse’s *No Title* (1967), a sheet of gridded paper in which Hesse has inscribed small circles, Margaret Iversen, referencing Benjamin Buchloh, notes, “For Buchloh, Hesse adopted the diagrammatic mode in order to register her sense of impossibility of any spontaneous, unmediated gesture under the coercive and instrumentalizing regime of capitalism, while at the same time subtly subverting that regime.”²⁸⁹ Iversen suggests that “Buchloh’s critical model...sets in opposition a coercive and alienating schema and a

²⁸⁷ Lippard, “Eccentric Abstraction,” 102.

²⁸⁸ Rosalind Krauss, “Grids,” 50. Later in the article, Krauss verifies that the grid as “flattened” or “anti-real” as a conceit. She writes, “The grid’s mythic power is that it makes us able to think we are dealing with materialism (or sometimes science, or logic) while at the same time provides us with a release into belief (or illusion, or fiction)” (54). She cites how the structuralists use grid-like formations to arrange the “sequential features of a story” (55).

²⁸⁹ Margaret Iversen, “Desire and the Diagrammatic,” *Oxford Art Journal* 30.1, 2016, 5–6. In his first footnote in “Hesse’s Endgame,” Buchloh, suggests, as a “first elementary definition of the diagrammatic...to be the one variety of abstraction that recognizes externally existing and pre-given systems of spatio-temporal quantification or schemata of the statistical collection of data as necessarily and primarily determining a chosen pictorial order.” Buchloh, “Hesse’s Endgame: Facing the Diagram,” 117.

residual somatic mark,” which establishes “Hesse’s drawings on graph paper figure both an acknowledgment of the alienating structures of capitalism and her struggle to oppose them.”²⁹⁰ In its place, Iversen proposes, “Yet, what if one argued instead, that her small circular gestures do not struggle against, but rather willingly accommodate themselves to the grid while putting pressure on its fixity? A given structural matrix, like language or artistic convention, would then be understood as animated or disturbed by an insistent bodily perturbation.”²⁹¹

Like the artist he was paying homage to, Chabet also put “pressure on...fixity.”²⁹² While the Marcoses attempted to wield artistic production, particularly abstraction, for nation-building and diplomacy, Chabet’s works in *For E.H.* exposed the fragility of this control. *New Works* or *For E.H.* presented a series of works that employed similar strategies of stretching and piercing in various configurations that created and drew attention to surface as an unstable construct generated between the work and the viewer. The works exhibited were not only relational in terms of the viewer, but also with one another; the individual works inform or engage with the ones around it. For example, the transparency of nylon used for *Pink Painting* betrays how Chabet has constructed similar works opaque rubber. The one frame with a single piece of rubber in *Kite Traps* helps emphasize the other *Kite Traps* as a series of iterative lines. It also highlights the wall as a significant surface, which is further affirmed by the white frames of *Sky Horizons* that seem to fade into the whiteness of the gallery walls.

Art—particularly painting in the case of *For E.H.*—depended on the viewer to imagine and fill in the surface on which the artist creates, purporting the viewer’s experience as one that

²⁹⁰ Iversen, “Desire and the Diagrammatic,” 6.

²⁹¹ Iversen, “Desire and the Diagrammatic,” 6.

²⁹² Iversen, “Desire and the Diagrammatic,” 6.

is uncontrollable and fluctuating with meaning that never seems to coalesce. Within Chabet's works are the "bodily perturbations"—ones that remind the viewer of her own body and its potential—that disturbed the system of order and control so desired of the Marcoses' authoritarianism. Furthermore, Chabet's floppy grids and tattered lines suggest that one cannot take the universalism of modernism for granted; the struggle of the upright grid—usually free from the ills of time and place—seemed emblematic of the Philippines' own struggle for autonomy, artistic and otherwise. Unlike social realist artists of the period, Chabet chose not to push back but, like Hesse's circles, exert pressure on the existing paradigm while successfully "wielding" the tools of its existing order.²⁹³

Drawing at the Door: *Bakawan*

[fig. 2.31] Intended to be viewed only through the large glass pane of Small Gallery's locked door, *Bakawan*, an installation of hanging *bakawan* (mangrove) segments, continued Chabet's exploration of drawing with mundane materials in 1974. Made from nearly uniform pieces of mangrove hanging equidistant from one another in measured rows, *Bakawan*, like many of Chabet's works in *For E.H.*, features the grid as its primary ordering structure. Although they appear identical in size and shape, the *bakawan* branches maintain individual characteristics such as slight variations in curvature. According to Albano's notes from the exhibition, Chabet had purchased the mangrove pieces, commonly used as inexpensive firewood in Manila, in "bundles and large piles" from Divisoria, a cheap goods shopping center in

²⁹³ Iversen, "Desire and the Diagrammatic," 10. Iversen writes, "I reconsider the diagrammatic as a paradigm of drawing that acknowledges our existence as hybrid creatures both caught up in and *wielding* our language, science, prosthetic machines, social institutions—not constrained, alienated and nearly powerless in the face of them."

Manila.²⁹⁴ Chabet had intended the installation to be exhibited as the solitary work within the Small Gallery behind a closed (and locked) glass door that only permitted the viewer to “peep through a perspective of rough lines.”²⁹⁵

In his notes on the exhibition, Albano describes *Bakawan* as Chabet’s “tri-dimensional drawing of lines.”²⁹⁶ As part of the installation, Chabet had chosen to paint everything in the Small Gallery besides the wood, including the hooks on the ceiling, a “stark white” to “give maximum contrast between line and ground.”²⁹⁷ Albano designates the white wall of the gallery as the drawing’s “ground” and the mangrove pieces as its “rough lines.” Similar to *Kite Traps*, which also employed the ready-made line, Chabet gives special attention to the white wall as a significant part of his work’s surface. Like *Kite Traps*, *Bakawan* activates the wall as ground for drawing through the installation of lines made not from ink or paint, but objects. In lieu of flexible, horizontally stretched rubber tires, however, *Bakawan* comprises vertically oriented segments of wood. While gravitational pull in *Kite Traps* push its horizontal lines downwards, forcing them to droop and betray the struggles of maintaining a straight line, *Bakawan* depends on gravity as the vertical lines result from the weight of the suspended wood. Chabet’s exploration of line demonstrated natural forces, like gravity, to be both burden and benefit to the exploration of drawing.

Chabet placed great importance on the verticality of the lines in *Bakawan*. Albano’s exhibition notes indicate that Chabet had removed the handle of the door to the Small Gallery to

²⁹⁴ Exhibition notes Notes for *Bakawan*, Documentation of Exhibitions, Small Gallery (Jul-Dec 1974), Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

²⁹⁵ Joy Dayrit’s unpublished notes for *Bakawan*, Chabet Archive, Asia Art Archive.

²⁹⁶ Dayrit, unpublished notes for *Bakawan*.

²⁹⁷ Exhibition Notes for *Bakawan*, Documentation of Exhibitions, Small Gallery (Jul-Dec 1974), Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

prevent the inclusion of superfluous horizontal lines in the installation's viewing experience. This also prevented the viewer's access into the room, retaining separation between the viewer and the public. The viewer would stand on one side of the Small Gallery's glass door and peer into the room at the hanging *bakawan*. No spotlights were used; the white cube gallery was lit with four florescent lights placed on the ground to create an even light. Depending on the viewer's position and distance from the door, the mangroves, hung in a grid of 7 by 8 rows at a "certain height decided by the artist," might resemble a row of vertical lines as the segments closest to the door conceal the ones behind it. A shift in the viewer's position to left or right, or even slightly farther away, could reveal the dimensionality of the rows of mangroves extending towards the back wall. While the recession of the mangroves feels flattened because the viewer experiences it through the barrier of a locked glass door, if we imagine the white wall to be ground and the mangroves to be line, the bodily shift of the viewer causes these lines—vulnerable to the viewer's placement—to flicker on the white ground of the gallery.

As *Bakawan* is subject to the viewer's placement, so is the viewer to the work. Whereas *Sky Horizons*, another one of Chabet's early hanging installations, responded to painting as a perspectival window onto the world by rendering that premise into three-dimensions around which viewers could circumambulate, situated behind the locked door of the Small Gallery, *Bakawan*'s installation prevents that same kind of physical access. As Bunoan suggests in her recent essay on Chabet, "The frustration brought on by the physical separation of the closed glass door heightens our desire to see the work; more than just viewers, we are turned into voyeurs."²⁹⁸ Distinct from viewers, voyeurs connote intrusion: they were visual intruders that can only look at, but never fully participate in, a space that does not welcome those present. Bunoan further

²⁹⁸ Ringo Bunoan, "Seeing and Unseeing: The Works of Roberto Chabet," 91.

suggests that, “by framing and restricting our view of the work, Chabet essentially collapsed the dimensions into a flat picture plane, creating a window into something else....In *Bakawan*...the window represents a kind of distant nature that is made further inaccessible to viewers.”²⁹⁹ That “distant world”—international modernism as represented by the CCP—feels closed off to the local audience, who operated as voyeurs in this practice.

Justification for Chabet’s somewhat puzzling installation occurred due to pressure for quick development in the Philippines. Public education at the CCP depended on mediated exchange between artists, museum administrators, and the audience in which the audience would rely on museum workers, such as Albano, to explain or curate comprehensible exhibitions that pushed public understanding of art. In “Developmental Art of the Philippines,” Albano connects the Cultural Center of the Philippines with the beginning of “developmental art” and notes that “‘developmental’ was an operative word given by our government and press to government projects for fast implementation....The implication of a fast-action learning method is similar to that of developmental art.”³⁰⁰ Albano further notes, “As works of new artists become more complex, the Museum’s curatorial staff had to organize exhibits that would elicit response and establish a healthy rapport. The intricate trafficking of information and response had to be maintained at a high pace.”³⁰¹ When asked why the CCP promoted “experimental art” given that, as a state-sponsored institution, they “should be concerned with established art,” Albano

²⁹⁹ Bunoan, “Seeing and Unseeing: The Works of Roberto Chabet,” 91.

³⁰⁰ Raymundo Albano, “Developmental Art of the Philippines,” *Philippine Supplement*, Vol. 2, No. 4, July–August 1981, 15.

³⁰¹ Albano, “Developmental Art of the Philippines,” 15.

responds that the “Museum has adopted a policy of giving priority to contemporary experiences so as to develop a stable of present-day artists who can be ahead of the international front.”³⁰²

Yet, while *Bakawan* physically closed off its premises to the viewer, it permits another form of access through its materiality. Made from pre-cut segments of *bakawan* often used as local firewood, it represents a shift from the manufactured materials—nylons and rubber inner tubes—that Chabet manipulated in *For E.H.* to organic materials subject to rot and decay. And, unlike *Kite Traps* or *Pink Painting*, the materials in *Bakawan* are left legible to the local audience as pieces of firewood purchasable from the market. Though Chabet had purchased his readymade lines in bundles at the market, these lines still exemplified the unsteady hand of art making. By procuring his materials from nature (via Divisoria), *Bakawan*’s lines were imprecise and retained minor differences. **[fig. 2.32]** A photograph of a lone segment against a white ground shows a gnarled and imperfect line. In fact, taken as a single unit, it almost does not resemble a line at all, betraying how one understands the way objects produce meaning in tandem with one another. Yet, from a distance the mangrove segments look nearly identical; their ordered configuration and repetition serve to obscure and mitigate their minor idiosyncrasies. The grid functions as a method of flattening difference. Upon closer and more prolonged observation, the viewer discerns irregularities in curvature, width, and color of the mangroves reminiscent of an instable flow of ink from a pen. While the grid as an ordering mechanism might temporarily conceal difference, it does not obliterate it.

Chabet employed *Bakawan*’s rigid grid-like format—one that rendered its individual components nearly uniform—to encourage the viewer towards a deeper and more prolonged engagement with the world. The grid fails to obscure the differences between the mangrove

³⁰² Albano, “Developmental Art of the Philippines,” 15.

segments when one actively observes rather than passively consumes it as identical pieces.

Chabet planned a corresponding book to *Bakawan* that also encouraged the viewer's sustained engagement. In private notes on the exhibition, Dayrit recorded that Chabet was planning a 1000-page book filled with black and white photographs to highlight the differences among the mangrove segments. In contrast to his installation in the Small Gallery, the book highlighted individual mangrove segments, with each page comprising one mangrove photograph.

Instead of including 1000 distinct mangroves—each mangrove represented by a single photograph—Chabet wanted to feature 999 mangroves. One mangrove would be included twice. The artist believed the double inclusion would encourage the reader to carefully examine each photograph (and the differences among them) to look for the repeated mangrove. In the part of her notes designated as “between Bobby (Chabet) and me,” Dayrit also noted the book's emphasis on sustained examination. She wrote, “‘Reading’ the book can be meditative. Turning the pages one by one, looking at each *bakawan* different from one another, looking for a *bakawan* repeated.”³⁰³ Dayrit and Chabet both imagined the reader—like the viewer of *Bakawan*—to be one defined by his capacity to methodically look.

Reading a book as a repetitive and meditative practice might recall Chabet's actions in *Tearing to Pieces*. In the performance, Chabet makes the meditative process of reading visible through physical exertion—his yogic inversions. He rifles through Duldulao's book as he pretends to read it, and then repeatedly and methodically tears out its pages. And Chabet does conceptualize his own *Bakawan* tome as comparable to Duldulao's. He echoed Duldulao's insistence towards international circulation; Dayrit noted that only 100 copies of the book would

³⁰³ Dayrit, unpublished notes for *Bakawan*.

be made to be “sold to major libraries and museums outside the Philippines.”³⁰⁴ In fact, only two copies were to be left in the Philippines: one for Chabet and one for Manuel Duldulao, the author of *Contemporary Philippine Art*. According to Dayrit’s private notes, Duldulao’s copy would “be given to him by the artist (with an ax).”

By suggesting that the author receive the book alongside a destructive tool, Chabet directly refers back his own performance with Duldulao’s text in *Tearing to Pieces* at the *Exhibition of Objects* a year prior. The inclusion of the ax encourages Duldulao to mount his own pernicious performance or action with Chabet’s massive volume of *Bakawan* and thus elevate its visibility through hearsay and intrigue—similar to what had occurred with *Contemporary Philippine Art* after *Tearing to Pieces*. Chabet’s adaptability and humor regarding how *Tearing to Pieces* resulted in greater success for the book he had been criticizing demonstrated how he understood his work as ongoing, reciprocal processes between the past and present, the artist and his materials, and the artist and the viewer uncontrolled by artist intention or individuality. While Chabet tried to control certain viewing experiences of *Bakawan* with the closed door, stark painted walls, and all over fluorescent lights, it was always subject to the viewer’s position outside the door.

Of her mentor, Bunoan argues, “Chabet’s patently unmonumental works are responses to the Modernism that was in place in the Philippines in the 1960s, when he first entered the art scene. As a kind of breach accompanied by both fear and beauty, modernity for Chabet is ‘the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent.’ It always exists in the present and each generation

³⁰⁴ Dayrit, unpublished notes for *Bakawan*.

would have its own moment of modernity.”³⁰⁵ *Bakawan* exemplified a work in the present. In 2012, the curatorial team struggled to re-install *Bakawan* in a tribute exhibition to Chabet titled *To Be Continued* at the CCP. Ma. Victoria T. Herrera, then Museum Director of the CCP, writes that “*Bakawan*...underscored the concept of the ephemeral, not only in form, but also in the objects used....Thirty-eight years since it was first mounted in the Small Gallery, the conditions to re-fabricate *Bakawan* had been altered not by the manufacturers but by ecological concerns.”³⁰⁶ Herrera continues to explain how while Chabet “worked on the premise that this material was ubiquitous to the Filipino’s daily life,” the “decline of mangroves in the Philippines” during the 1990s contributed to “a law that bans cutting and prohibits private ownership.”³⁰⁷ The result was that the re-installation of *Bakawan* in *To Be Continued* was sourced from limited options outside of Metro Manila of branches that were not as varied in character as the ones originally used for *Bakawan* in 1974. Chabet’s choice of material was not only a marker of place, but also of his specific time as terrain has changed in the Philippines.

In a profile with Marge Enriquez in *Business World* in the late 1980s, Chabet remarked that his artworks were “not paintings in the sense that they are not oils on canvas...[But] I always feel that my works, even if they are three-dimensional, are involved with issues of painting. It’s my way of defining what painting is or what it could be.”³⁰⁸ According to the article, even “martial law failed to dampen his exuberance, nor his penchant for experimental

³⁰⁵ Ringo Bunoan, “Seeing and Unseeing: The Works of Roberto Chabet,” 63.

³⁰⁶ Ma. Victoria T. Herrera, “Preserving Memory and the Ephemeral, Reconciling Conservation and Conceptual Art Practice: The Case of Roberto Chabet,” in *Roberto Chabet* edited by Ringo Bunoan (Manila: King Kong Art Projects Unlimited, 2015), 381.

³⁰⁷ Herrera, “Preserving Memory and the Ephemeral,” 381.

³⁰⁸ Marge Enriquez, “Fine Arts’ Nutty Professor,” *Business World*, May 18, 1988.

art.”³⁰⁹ In fact, the years following Ferdinand Marcos’ declaration of martial law seemed to be some of his most productive: he had recently returned from his Rockefeller Grant and the recently inaugurated CCP provided a major international venue in which he could experiment and exhibit his installations. Yet, to understand Chabet as an esoteric artist who catered to Imelda Marcos’ interests would ignore how his work attempted to redefine painting for the Philippines. His performance of *Tearing to Pieces* in the CCP’s atrium demonstrated his own understanding of how his work attempted to operate outside the institution, but was simultaneously surrounded (and supported) by it.

Chabet experimented with the possibility of what painting could be in the Philippines and created works that relied heavily on the viewer’s movement and perception to create momentary surfaces for his compositions. His works in *New Works* and *Bakawan* explore how drawing and painting operated as a series of procedures that ultimately depended on the viewer to continually affirm its surface or support. Their unsteady surfaces create a sense of reciprocity between the viewer and Chabet’s work, stabilizing only temporarily with the viewer’s consent. In employing abstraction that seemed to bleed into the everyday surroundings—such as pieces of purchased wood that used wall as surface—Chabet proposed that the world as similarly precarious.

While the Marcoses might attempt to wield artistic production and culture for nation-building purposes, Chabet’s work exposed the instability of this control. His employment of found objects and everyday materials, while not the primary focus of his experiments, reflected the physical realities of his locality. Chabet used things such as free tires or cheap firewood and attempted to order them into modernist grids that sag, spring, droop and flop, revealing the difficulties of maintaining an upright grid with the resources readily available to him. These grids functioned as structures deeply entangled in modernism that Chabet could use to

³⁰⁹ Enriquez, “Fine Arts’ Nutty Professor.”

demonstrate his struggle with modernism's uncomfortable asymmetrical development—one that insisted that the Philippines had to catch up.

CHAPTER III

Locating Shop 6

As a student at the University of the Philippines-Diliman in the early 1970s, Yolanda Laudico (now Johnson) had a fine arts professor who assigned oil painting—hardly an unusual assignment for a visual art class. In response, Laudico collected crude oil from local gasoline stations. She then dipped leaves of paper torn from old books into the slick black oil and pasted them on a board. In a recent conversation, she slyly remarked, “My teacher wanted us to do oil painting. Oil paint was very expensive...I was a student. I couldn’t afford it. So I used crude oil. My teacher asked me what I was doing, and I said that it was oil painting.”³¹⁰ Throughout the 1970s, Laudico frequently explored substitutions to paint by using everyday materials; in addition to oil acquired from gas stations, she also used tubes of mint-scented toothpaste from her bathroom. Laudico also continued her early experiments with crude oil at her *Thirteen Artists* exhibition at the CCP by soaking banana leaves in the oil and draping them over fishing wire strung over the length of the Small Gallery.

Like many members of Shop 6, including Roberto Chabet, Laudico used alternative and locally found materials in order to investigate questions of art, labor, the everyday, and the world. The following chapter elaborates on the development of conceptual art in Manila through discussion of Shop 6, a group of loosely affiliated artists who manipulated everyday, organic, and found materials in ways that explored the role and legacy of art making in the Philippines.

³¹⁰ Yolanda Johnson (artist, member of Shop 6), in discussion with author, December 9, 2014, Manila, Philippines.

While those considered part of Shop 6 fluctuated throughout the 1970s, members included aforementioned Laudico, Chabet (who is often considered the group's leader or father figure), Fernando Modesto, Joe Bautista, Alan Rivera, Nap Jamir II, and Rodolfo Gan, among others. Though each of these artists had distinct practices and styles, they frequently handled everyday objects, discards, or debris in ways that encouraged viewers towards a heightened perception and questioning of their lived world. While artists in the 1960s concerned themselves with painting—abstract painting in particular—Shop 6 artists chose real world objects over pure abstraction to engage their spectators to act within the world. Instead of pieces of canvas covered in paint, the artists active in Shop 6 wanted to create “situations that can assault the senses and leave recurring imprint in the mind.”³¹¹

Following President Ferdinand Marcos' declaration of martial law in 1972, many artists who took part of Shop 6 grappled with what it meant to make art under an authoritarian regime, particularly one that had so publicly supported the arts with its recent inauguration of a multi-functional cultural center. Many of these artists had come of age at the University of the Philippines (U.P.) during Marcos' reign. Artists today still consider U.P. the most prestigious institution for a fine arts degree; under martial law, the university, like many college campuses in the 1970s, was a center for political action and protest. Unlike Philippine social realists, who called for heavy opposition against the Marcoses, members of Shop 6 never claimed to be revolutionaries or politically engaged artists.³¹² In fact, Dayrit, who documented and occasionally exhibited with Shop 6, wrote in her journal that she and Chabet supported the re-

³¹¹ “Summer Exhibition at the CCP Main Gallery,” *Bulletin Today*, May 25, 1973, 4.

³¹² For more information on Social Realist artists, see Alice Guillermo, *Social Realism in the Philippines*, Manila, ASPHODEL, 1987; Alice Guillermo, *Protest/Revolutionary Art in the Philippines, 1970-1990*, Quezon City, University of the Philippines Press, 2001.

election of Ferdinand Marcos in 1969.³¹³ In this intellectual milieu, artists such as Laudico not only used materials alternative to paint to make statements about the cost of artist supplies and the belatedness of Philippine art, but also to explore the how these materials reacted to the pressures of duration and physical manipulation in order to engage their viewers in multi-sensorial experiences of their work. Though not explicitly political, these sensorial experiences often violated the standards of propriety established by Imelda Marcos at the CCP.

In discussing Shop 6 with Bunoan, Chabet stated that its members wanted to “match the activities in the CCP.”³¹⁴ Shop 6, Chabet claimed, was intended to be “an alternative to the CCP.”³¹⁵ The 1970s saw a proliferation of alternative and/or artist-run art spaces such as aforementioned Print Gallery, Sanctuary, Gallery 7, and Shop 6, all of which, as Albano notes, “helped in developing a new Philippine visual sensibility.”³¹⁶ Albano espouses that alternative spaces permitted artists to “try out some ideas which they themselves do not comprehend yet. Uncategorizable, raw, messy and temporal, the works are risky exercises which have to be done as experiment or as transitions.”³¹⁷ He argues that “alternative spaces free the artist of a bias” because “white walls can intimidate viewers, whereas in an abandoned store space, one feels no heightened reverences, so to speak.”³¹⁸ Albano further suggests that alternative spaces play an

³¹³ Joy Dayrit Journals, November 16, 1969. Ateneo Library of Women’s Writings (ALIWW), Envelope 1.1.

³¹⁴ Chabet, interview, Ortigas, 2008, transcript pg. 22.

³¹⁵ Chabet, interview, Ortigas, 2008, transcript pg. 22.

³¹⁶ Ray Albano, “Alternative Spaces,” *Philippine Art Supplement* 2, no. 6 (Nov.–Dec. 1981): 9.

³¹⁷ Albano, “Alternative Spaces.”

³¹⁸ Albano, “Alternative Spaces.”

important role in the artistic ecosystem because “when the work [from an alternative space] is ready for acceptance,” the curator can then introduce it to the public in the museum.³¹⁹

Yet, before the emergence of Shop 6, many of these artists already exhibited works that similarly dealt “uncategorizable, raw, messy and temporal” works that featured waste and abjection in the CCP as part of the institution’s *Summer Exhibitions* and *Thirteen Artists*. Instead of arguing that members of Shop 6 made explicitly political art, the chapter explores how their manipulation of mundane things transformed the CCP from a repository of high culture—a response to Imelda’s call for truth, beauty, and goodness—to a place filled with “pieces of junk.”³²⁰ According to Albano, inclusion of “junk” would “lead one to consider the virtues of things considered ugly and cheap” to make one “aware of an environment suddenly turning visible.”³²¹ Artists involved with Shop 6 challenged the CCP’s pristine “white walls” as an impediment that could “intimidate” viewers by introducing familiar odors and abject objects.³²² Not just a site to house “cultural treasures and works of art,” as Imelda had claimed, the CCP held exhibitions that enticed viewers to once again cast doubt on its function, revealing it to be a site of struggle rather than authoritarian control.³²³

The group first exhibited together in 1974 at *Kalinangan ng Lahi* (Lahi Gallery), an alternative gallery/café that had recently opened in Quezon City, Metro Manila. After this initial exhibition, Corito Araneta Kalaw, co-owner of *Sining Kamalig*, invited the artists to use a vacant

³¹⁹ Albano, “Alternative Spaces.”

³²⁰ Albano, “Developmental Art of the Philippines,” 15.

³²¹ Albano, “Developmental Art of the Philippines,” 15.

³²² Albano, “Developmental Art of the Philippines,” 15.

³²³ Imelda as documented by Jose S. Salazar, “‘Not Where It’s At’: Cultural Center is Anti-Revolutionary Instrument of Establishment and Therefore Not Truly Cultural, Says Author,” *Philippine Free Press*, November 15, 1969. Over decade later, however, Albano writes that, “A permanent collection is not possible to have because the CCP has no building and accompanying budget yet.” From Albano, “Developmental Art of the Philippines,” 15.

commercial storefront in the shopping arcade from 1974 to 1975. Despite its location within a space used for commerce, the artists had no intention of creating sellable artworks for their new exhibition space—it would exclusively be used as a site for experimentation.³²⁴ Shop 6 continued to be the name of the experimental gallery space until it closed in 1975, after which the name also referred to the loosely affiliated group of conceptual artists who frequently exhibited there.³²⁵

The first two weeks of exhibition programming at Shop 6 began with two group exhibitions and then followed with a schedule of weekly solo shows. Each exhibition, which was intended only for a single weekend, opened with a gathering of local artists. The solo exhibitions eventually culminated with a group exhibition called “101 Artists”, which included invited “guest” artists like Eduardo Castrillo, Rene Castillo, Ray Albano, and Judy Sibayan.³²⁶ So many artists participated that *101 Artists* spilled out into the *Kamalig* parking lot, pushing art outside the boundaries of exhibition space into the real world.³²⁷ After less than a year of exhibitions, Shop 6 at *Sining Kamalig* closed. In November 1975, despite the initial claims that Shop 6 was an alternative to the CCP, the artists held a major group exhibition CCP Main Gallery called *Shop 6 Exhibition*, which included Laudico, Chabet, Albano, Dayrit, Modesto, Rivera, and Red Mansueto among others.

These artists usually only exhibited each of their installations and “environmental sculptures” once because their artworks were meant to be temporary, though artists would repeat

³²⁴ “101 Artists: Incidents at Shop 6,” *Marks* 1, no. 2-4 (May-Oct 1974).

³²⁵ The name Shop 6 arose because the artists had mistakenly believed the storefront to be shop number six; by the time they realized that 6 was not the actual number of the shop, the name Shop 6 had “stuck.” Roberto Chabet Interview with Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Onsite-Access Only.

³²⁶ “101 Artists: Incidents at Shop 6,” *Marks*.

³²⁷ “101 Artists: Incidents at Shop 6,” *Marks*.

certain motifs and materials.³²⁸ The intended ephemerality of their work was further enhanced by their choice of materials. Their artworks often comprised things that disintegrated or morphed over time. By consistently interrogating the stability of real, everyday objects and materials in their work, members of Shop 6 encouraged viewers to experience an alternate, more open world than the one they inhabited—one in which the CCP was more than just a “pantheon” or mausoleum of high culture.³²⁹ Shop 6’s weekly exhibition openings also offered the possibility for nuanced forms of assembly and action that appeared relatively benign to authoritarian control.

While not intended to be an exhaustive survey of the Shop 6’s activities, the chapter attends to Shop 6’s artistic practice through specific group and solo exhibitions as opposed to individual works because most of their work was only exhibited once in temporary settings. Therefore, under these circumstances, discussing the separate components of an exhibition as a whole installation (or “situation”) follows more closely to the physical experience of their artwork. The temporary storefront at *Sining Kamalig* allowed artists to experiment with non-traditional materials, such as dirty bottles and other discards procured from the side of the road or in other mundane encounters.

As a storefront in a commercial shopping arcade, Shop 6 functioned, to some extent, like a “found space” for artists to symbolically operate outside the political concerns of the CCP. This separation, however, was artificial—though the Shop 6 space operated as an alternative to the CCP, Shop 6 also exhibited at the CCP as a group and individual artists continued to have solo

³²⁸ Rina B. Jimenez, “How Culture Came to Cubao,” *Philippine Panorama*, May 12, 1974, 15. In the article, Jimenez describes the work exhibited at Lahi Gallery by Chabet and friends as “environmental sculptures.”

³²⁹ Quijano de Manila, “Parthenon or Pantheon: The First Lady Answers the Blast on The Cultural Center by Senator Aquino,” *Philippines Free Press*, February 22, 1969, 2–3, 72–73. In the article, de Manila asks whether or not the CCP is a Parthenon which “signifies high culture” or a Pantheon, which while “abroad...specifies memorial or monument to the illustrious dead” but “in the Philippines [has] come to mean a cemetery.”

exhibitions at the Center throughout the decade. In discussing specific works from Shop 6 artists and how these artists moved between state-sanctioned and “alternative” spaces, the chapter explores the conditions that permitted the fluidity of artists who refused to fit into the cultural ideals of the Marcoses’ regime.

Inappropriate Forms at the CCP’s *Summer Exhibitions*

Many of the artists who participated in Shop 6 took part in the annual summer exhibitions at the CCP curated by Raymundo Albano in the early 1970s. These generically titled *Summer Exhibitions* ran for about a month in the CCP’s Main Gallery every year from its inauguration through 1973. Though the summer exhibitions were short-lived, the ideas cultivated within them continued throughout much of the decade. The first one took place in the summer of 1970—the summer immediately following the opening of the CCP in December 1969. *Summer Exhibition 1970* was an encyclopedic display of Philippine modern art that covered nearly “six decades of Philippine art history.”³³⁰ According to Albano, the exhibition combined old and new art forms, including “over 100 paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, and ‘but-is-it-art?’ objects.”³³¹ While the summer exhibitions may have started as a way to showcase a broad range of 20th century Philippine art, three short years later, the CCP summer exhibition focused almost exclusively on ‘but-is-it-art’ objects by the “most progressive artists” in the country.³³² The roster for *Summer Exhibition 1973*—the last one at the CCP—included artists who exhibited at Shop 6 the following year, such as Bautista, Laudico, Modesto, and Gan.

³³⁰ Ray R. Albano, “Summer Art Summary: A Span of Six Decades,” *Manila Chronicle*, April 26, 1970, 10.

³³¹ Albano, “Summer Art Summary,” 10.

³³² According to Albano, *Summer Exhibition 1973* consisted primarily of “objects...which create situations that can assault the senses and leave recurring imprint in the mind.” Ray Albano, “Summer Exhibition at the CCP Main Gallery,” *Bulletin Today*, May 25, 1973, 4.

While the first summer exhibition in 1970 began to exhibit some “but-is-it-art” objects, such as Marciano Galang’s *Memory Pieces* or Angel Flores’s *Three Paintings and One Drawing*,³³³ notes to *Summer Exhibition 1971* reflect an inclination towards “situational and environmental works.”³³⁴ Leonidas Benesa later explains that terms such as “situational” and “environmental” were used through the 1970s to indicate art’s inextricable entanglement with its physical surroundings. He wrote that “the work being exhibited” should not be considered “within a vacuum, but part of an entire ambiance, the surrounding, *in situ*.”³³⁵ Benesa also affirmed the importance of the viewer’s engagement with the situation presented by the artist, arguing, “The work is most successful if the spectator himself or herself is able to participate in the ‘concept’ or ‘experience’ of the artist-situationist.”³³⁶

As discussed in the dissertation introduction, artists and art critics often used terms such as “situational,” “environmental,” and “conceptual” interchangeably to refer to art that seemed unbounded from the limitations of painting or sculpture. Terms like “environmental” and “situational” also emphasized the real-world environment or situation created and/or accentuated by the works, suggesting that the bounds between the work and the world remained unclear. The exhibition notes for *Summer Exhibition 1971* also contrast situational and environmental art with another dominant category: abstraction. According to the notes, despite the fact that the original theme of *Summer Exhibition 1971* was abstraction—and Albano originally intended to “include only hard-core abstract works”—the exhibition later evolved to “include situational and

³³³ Angel Flores was a fictional artist created by Joe Bautista, Ramon Katigbak, and Chabet. See Ramon C. Sunico, “Who is Angel Flores?”, *Rogue*, November 2011.

³³⁴ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1971*, Documentation of Exhibitions, Main Gallery (1971), Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

³³⁵ Leonidas V. Benesa, “Situational Sculpture at CCP,” *Philippines Daily Express*, April 27, 1979, 27, 32.

³³⁶ Benesa, “Situational Sculpture at CCP.”

environmental works.”³³⁷ *Summer Exhibition 1971* exemplified the kind of programming that would dominate the CCP that decade—one that purposely eschewed pure abstraction for art with stronger ties to the physical world around it.

In fact, exhibition notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*, also curated by Albano, continued to lament the state of abstraction—particularly abstract painting—in favor of “representational” art in the Philippines.³³⁸ The notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972* exclaim that based on the “present preoccupation of the younger artists” exhibiting, the show should instead be called *Post-Philippine Abstract Representational Art*. Albano accused most abstract paintings from the 1950s onwards as being a mere “distillation of representational forms, organic forms, and splotches, lines, and hazes drawn on the canvas” and argued that despite abstraction’s “popular recognition among the juries and art schools...its developmental absurdity is obvious.”³³⁹ In short, the organizers of *Summer Exhibition 1972* asserted that abstract painting felt irrelevant and outdated. Many young artists did not see abstract painting (as oil or acrylic on canvas) as an asset for Philippine modernism; the approach seemed to be “suffering from over-exhaustion.”³⁴⁰

And while some “responsible” artists “resorted to representational paintings” other, more “broad-minded” artists approached representation in a different manner.³⁴¹ According to the exhibition notes, these artists created a “non-sale-able, uncategorizable and iconoclastic type of art...[which was] labeled as ‘avant-garde’ art.” These artworks were also considered

³³⁷ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1971*, Documentation of Exhibitions, Main Gallery (1971), Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

³³⁸ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*, Documentation of Exhibitions, Main Gallery (1972), Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

³³⁹ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*.

³⁴⁰ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*.

³⁴¹ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*.

“representational” because “they represent something very definite and apparent: themselves. If paper is used, it is shown as paper: the works are presented in a more straightforward and honest manner.”³⁴² The notes further indicate that the inclusion of representational (non-abstract) objects permitted viewers to freely associate and contemplate their place in the world as “the viewer...can lull himself to dreams, tales and things” because the artwork was “far from being abstract.”³⁴³

Though not many photographs documenting the exhibition are extant, the exhibition notes and reviews include descriptions of the work in *Summer Exhibition 1972*. Elizabeth V. Reyes, for example, described the overall content of the exhibition in a review written for *PACE* magazine. She expressed, “In general, the modern artists use mundane, simple, everyday materials—toothpaste, rope, paper bags—to make their creative statements. Without transforming or abstracting the original features of those materials, they may suggest an activity, a process, an attitude.”³⁴⁴ Reyes made a similar argument as the exhibition notes: that by presenting materials in a straightforward, un-abstracted, and mundane manner, the works at *Summer Exhibition 1972* engaged the viewer with the world beyond the museum and the art circuit, recasting the CCP as a place in process rather than an establishment of high culture.

Some of the aforementioned “simple, everyday materials” described by Reyes included toothpaste and brown paper lunch bags—objects used in the exhibition by Laudico and Bautista, respectively. The notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972* also contained praise for these two young

³⁴² Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*.

³⁴³ 1972 Summer Exhibition Notes, Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives. The observations made by the summer exhibition organizers position avant-garde Philippine art within a growing discourse of modern realism in which the materials retained their external world reference—e.g. paper representing paper and not as mere support.

³⁴⁴ Elizabeth V. Reyes, “Summer Mix,” *Pace Magazine*, May 26, 1972, 36-37.

artists and their “bravura” for experimenting with vernacular materials.³⁴⁵ Laudico’s *Toothpaste* consisted of a metal column covered with sticky lines of toothpaste that she had squeezed out of commercial tubes. Embedded in the lines of minty paste were plastic caps that Laudico had removed from the empty toothpaste tubes and stuck onto the column. The “squashed” tubes of toothpaste—bereft of their contents—and the empty cardboard boxes that once contained them littered the base of the toothpaste column.³⁴⁶ While on their own, the tacky lines might resemble rounded stripes of paint freshly extracted from their tubes, the strong, minty scent and the detritus around the covered column confirmed the substance as toothpaste.

Toothpaste was another example of Laudico’s investigations of vulgar or everyday materials to replace the most privileged material of fine art—paint.³⁴⁷ Exhibition notes specified that Laudico used “toothpaste as a substitute for oil paint.”³⁴⁸ Yet, while Laudico had first incorporated crude oil as a play on words in oil painting, she intended toothpaste to be a more tactile form of substitution. Toothpaste, she believed, was an appropriate replacement not only because it physically resembled lines of squeezed paint, but also because of the way the receptacles handled in her hand. As she grasped a tube to release toothpaste onto her toothbrush, this familiar action felt reminiscent of squeezing paint out of similar conduits.³⁴⁹ The empty

³⁴⁵ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*, Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

³⁴⁶ Reyes, “Summer Mix.”

³⁴⁷ Yolanda Laudico Interview with Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Onsite-Access Only. Laudico remarked that since the cost of paint was very, very expensive, she decided to use toothpaste as a medium. Laudico remarked, “So I must have used 100 tubes of toothpaste so it turned out more expensive than I thought. I wanted to make this sculpture stand look painterly and I wanted something cheap that simulated pigment. I got carried away. I bought all brands and I started looking at the different colors of toothpaste. So this actual work was colorful, it wasn’t white, there was strawberry flavor, banana flavor...I consumed all the toothpaste I could see.”

³⁴⁸ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*, Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

³⁴⁹ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*.

cardboard boxes and depleted tubes left around the toothpaste column optically stressed to the viewer that Laudico created *Toothpaste* from banal materials. As nearly every person has the experience of squeezing a tube of toothpaste, *Toothpaste* presented spectators with the visual manifestation of the ordinariness of generative acts.

Toothpaste was also one of Laudico's earliest forays in exploring how to bring the olfactory sense—and its mundane associations—into the art gallery. According to Laudico, one morning, as she brushed her teeth in the privacy of her own bathroom, the overwhelming odor of minty smell toothpaste overtook her. She decided that she wanted to extend the same olfactory sensation of minty toothpaste from the intimate space of her bathroom into the public gallery space. Viewers experienced toothpaste as the primary material in Laudico's installation through both sight and scent; the exhibition notes state that *Toothpaste* “attacked the olfactory senses with an antiseptic smell.”³⁵⁰ *Toothpaste*'s “antiseptic smell” recreated a sensation associated to the intimate space of a bathroom that was antithetical to the public museum space it inhabited. It caused viewers to recall personal grooming habits and drew attention to the discomfort of experiencing the olfactory sensations connected to a private, mundane space in a public setting usually visited for visual pleasure.

While Laudico introduced the olfactory as an important component of her work, Bautista focused on the ocular in his “visual situations.”³⁵¹ One of Bautista's “situations” at the *Summer Exhibition 1972* involved “a flock of 100 Paper Bags inside one alcove” of the CCP Main Gallery.³⁵² Bautista arranged the large number of empty bags in straight, even rows on the

³⁵⁰ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*.

³⁵¹ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*.

³⁵² Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*.

ground. He left enough space in between the bags in the alcove for viewers to circulate and closely examine them; the exhibition notes explicitly state that visitors were supposed to “go around the bags and scrutinize with [their] eyes the variations and intrinsic qualities of paper bags.”³⁵³ Although the bags were empty, the placement of the bags on the ground allowed viewers to peer into them, encouraging them to really examine the “situation” in front of them. Placed in close proximity to each other, small differences among the iterated bags become discernable despite the assumed uniformity of manufactured objects. The viewer’s immediate experience of close looking was the most important aspect of Bautista’s work. *100 Paper Bags* created curiosity out of the mundane as it provoked viewers to look closer at their world.

Laudico and Bautista’s contributions to *Summer Exhibition 1972* exemplified the kind of work that was decidedly not abstraction, but “representational in that they represent something very definite and apparent: themselves.”³⁵⁴ Bautista displayed a collection of unadorned paper bags in neat rows for systemic inspection of their “intrinsic qualities.”³⁵⁵ And though the lines of smeared toothpaste might—at first glance—be unidentifiable (or resemble paint in a museum setting), Laudico included empty toothpaste tubes and boxes in her installation so no mistake could be of its materiality and the source of minty aroma in the gallery. The inclusion of these banal and vulgar materials within the CCP also intervened with what Imelda imagined as “high art” for the Philippines and her affirmations of CCP as a site for truth, beauty, goodness (though the works were certainly shown in a “truthful” manner).

Additionally, the use of everyday materials without concealment or embellishment revealed a general desire for transparency that had been lacking in the Marcoses’ governance; the

³⁵³ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*.

³⁵⁴ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*.

³⁵⁵ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*.

“straightforward” and “honest manner” in which Laudico and Bautista displayed their objects contrasted the secretive actions and furtive disappearances affiliated with the Marcoses under martial law. Made from quotidian objects encountered by people going through their everyday lives, Bautista and Laudico’s work also elicits association with people’s daily routines.

Toothpaste’s distinctive minty odor, for example, might generate personal memories of brushing one’s teeth, recasting the state state-sanctioned space as an intimate and private one.

Documentation notes for *Summer Exhibition 1973* provide evidence of growing tension between the young artists exhibiting at the CCP and the CCP as an institution designed to promote a nationalist cultural narrative. *Summer Exhibition 1973* occurred one year before Shop 6 and would be the last one at the CCP. According to its documentation notes, *Summer Exhibition 1973* was “before one knew it...closed, replaced by something that would be more appropriate for the National Artists Award ceremonies and the Van Cliburn concerts.”³⁵⁶ These documentation notes also indicate that *Summer Exhibition* took place between May 31 and June 6, 1973.³⁵⁷ While *Summer Exhibition 1973* was mounted at the CCP for a similar duration to other summer exhibitions (*Summer Exhibition 1972* actually lasted less than a month), the exhibition was supposed to be up through July 1 and had closed prematurely for the National Artists Award and the Van Cliburn concerts.³⁵⁸

The suggestion that the exhibition was “replaced by something...more appropriate” for official national and international events indicated an ambivalent relationship between the exhibiting artists and the official interests of the CCP. While artists could experiment with less

³⁵⁶ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1973*, Documentation of Exhibitions, Main Gallery (1973), Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives. According to the preface, documentation was done by Raymundo Albano, Marilen A. Puertollano, and Alberto E. Sangel.

³⁵⁷ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1973*.

³⁵⁸ Albano, “Summer Exhibition at the CCP Main Gallery,” 4.

conventional forms in the CCP exhibition spaces in junctures between formal events, they failed to present a cohesive kind of Philippine art appropriate more high-profile purposes. In fact, in Dayrit's notes on Shop 6, she expressed that *Summer Exhibition 1973* "was ordered to be closed by Mrs. Marcos...to make room for a reception scheduled to be held in the Main Gallery."³⁵⁹

Artists participating in *Summer Exhibition 1973* continued to display everyday objects in an "honest manner."³⁶⁰ The notes describe that year's exhibition as "an impromptu type organization" in which "the stories behind the installation could be more interesting than the exhibits themselves."³⁶¹ The exhibition included work by Bautista and Laudico, such as Bautista's untitled "Coke & Pepsi Bottles" and large looms of wax paper by Laudico called *This is How Paper is Made* (1973). Laudico also continued her olfactory experiments from the prior *Summer Exhibition* with a hanging wooden grid filled with apples meant to decay over the duration of the exhibition. She called the latter installation *This is How Air is Strained* (1973), emphasizing the air moving through the grid of decaying apples as an important component of the work. Rodolfo Gan also participated in the exhibition with his installations of everyday materials, such as *Fall* (1973) and *Open* (1973). Gan constructed the former out of wood and rope and the latter out of cement and rope. His works, like Laudico's, morphed over time and collapsed before the exhibition concluded; according to the exhibition notes, "*Open* crumbled on the second day of the exhibit, and *Fall* fell afterwards."³⁶²

³⁵⁹ Joy Dayrit, *Notes on Shop 6*, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, accessed August 23, 2017, <http://www.aaa.org.hk/en/collection/search/archive/the-chabet-archive-other-documents/object/notes-on-shop-6/>

³⁶⁰ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*, Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

³⁶¹ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1973*, Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

³⁶² Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1973*.

Bautista included bottles and other discarded containers in a refrigerator as part of the inaugural group exhibition at Shop 6 the following year. At *Summer Exhibition 1973*, Bautista accompanied his untitled soda bottle installation with playfully worded annotations.³⁶³ While he captioned the Pepsi bottle as “This is the real thing. This is not our taste,” he annotated the Coke bottle as “This is our taste. This is not the real thing.”³⁶⁴ Since both bottles were actually Pepsi and Coke bottles, Bautista’s statements were not about whether or not the objects were *real* (as opposed to painted or sculpted) but rather whether the bottle and its contents were the *real thing*—in other words whether the thing was legitimately what it should be. While he described the “real thing” as “not our taste,” he declared the “not real thing” as “our taste,” questioning our judgment as we prefer the imposter. The viewer is potentially implicated by Bautista’s choice of pronoun— “our” can include the artist and the bystander alike. Despite the “straightforward” presentation of objects, Bautista implied through the accompanying text that “our taste”—both in terms of the sense of taste and the ability to discern quality—seemed easily be subject to deception.

On their own, the two bottles appear strange, but relatively innocuous in a gallery setting. An unsuspecting viewer might note the familiar shape of the soft drink containers, wonder if another guest had crassly forgotten to discard his trash, and walk by without much further contemplation. By adding captions to the bottles, Bautista engaged the potential viewer in a fictional discussion as they considered the literal taste and experience of the two widely known soft drinks. The viewer might wonder why Bautista choose to label Pepsi as the “real thing” despite the fact that Coke technically came before Pepsi (or even wonder if Coke did indeed

³⁶³ Bautista’s untitled “Coke & Pepsi Bottles” is one of the few conceptual artworks in the Philippines that takes language as an important component of the work.

³⁶⁴ Bautista, “Coke & Pepsi Bottles.”

come before the other). They might ask “What does real mean?” in reference to the text, eliciting questions of how and why we consider something more real over another. One might consider how “realness” depends on the subjective anticipation of Coke or Pepsi. A spectator could also dispute Bautista’s claim that “our” collective “taste” is for Coke by thinking “No it’s not! Coke is in fact not my taste! I definitively prefer Pepsi.” Like *100 Paper Bags*, Bautista’s untitled “Coke & Pepsi” asked the viewer to interrogate assumptions made in the larger world through mundane materials. Incorporating relatively common objects permitted the average person’s engagement in the conversation as they could easily imagine the varying tastes of the sugary pop of the drink bottles placed before them. And while whether something is the “real thing” in the case of Coke vs. Pepsi was benign, “Coke & Pepsi” encouraged the viewer to be present in their situation and mentally defend his or her preferences.

[fig. 3.1] Like *Toothpaste* at the *Summer Exhibition 1972*, Laudico chose the materials for *This is How Air is Strained* based on her desire to bring other sensory experiences into the gallery setting through readily available materials—this time she used fruit. Laudico remarked that she wanted to infiltrate the CCP gallery with the overwhelming scent of apples to conjure the fresh experience of an apple orchard.³⁶⁵ She was particularly drawn to the olfactory as a way to produce emotive association and recollection among viewers of her work. Since apples were not typically grown in the Philippines, not only do they bring the odor of the outdoors into the gallery, but their aroma also created a sensation of an environment completely outside of local experience in the Philippines. Through the crisp smell of apples, spectators were invited to imagine another world beyond their immediate reality. While the toothpaste might have drawn attention to the intimate space of the bathroom, the apples seem to allude to a world outside—an exotic, imagined world beyond the Philippines.

³⁶⁵ Yolanda Johnson (artist, member of Shop 6), in discussion with author, December 9, 2014, Manila, Philippines.

Laudico, however, did not intend the apples and their accompanying odor to retain their freshness for the entire duration of that year's summer exhibition. *This is How Air is Strained* not only continued her olfactory experimentation from *Summer Exhibition 1972*, but also addressed her interest in work that combined the artist's hand (and intention) with chance by incorporating elements that morphed or decayed over time. She made *This is How Air is Strained* by interlocking slender wooden planks together to form a small grid structure. She then hung the structure from the ceiling, slightly away from the wall. In each of the grid's square-shaped compartments, Laudico placed pieces of fresh apples meant to ripen and rot through the course of the exhibition. The fresh, sweet scent of apples that permeated through the CCP Main Gallery turned into the pungent odor of rotting fruit over time.

Similar to her later work at Shop 6, Laudico wanted *This is How Air is Strained* to be a work continually in process instead of a finished product. According to the artist, as the apples balanced on the narrow planks of the dangling grid, some of them fell off the structure and continued their decomposition on the ground. The tension between the order of the man-made grid contrasted with the precariousness of the balancing, splatting, decaying apples. The apples falling off the man-made structure seemed to mimic the natural motion of apples falling off a tree, recreating a situation from nature within the confines of the gallery. Since the apples consistently changed, they drew attention to Laudico's installation as an encounter, causing the viewer to think about how they experienced the world at a specific moment that never remained the same.

Following the progression of prior summer exhibitions at the CCP, *Summer Exhibition 1973* prominently displayed everyday objects and materials—some of which shifted over time—as a way to engage the viewer into contemplation of their situation and environment. Artists

drew on frank display of common objects to encourage viewers to participate in their immediate reality and suggested that these experiences extended to more than just visual acknowledgment. Despite the original fresh and foreign quality of Laudico's apples, the eventual rotting of their flesh bore similarity to other kinds of decay and garbage, replacing the sanitized air of the CCP with one that alluded to a more contaminated beyond its unspoiled walls. Artists exhibiting at *Summer Exhibition 1973* seemed particularly interested in the viewer's encounter and capacity to dialogue with the work over passive consumption and acceptance of it.

Summer Exhibition 1973 would be the last summer exhibition at the CCP in the 1970s.³⁶⁶ That year, the summer exhibition was replaced by the *CCP Mixed Exhibition*—an exhibition that resembled *Summer Exhibition 1970* and its more comprehensive contents rather than the messy (and smelly) experiments of 1973. Slight bitterness of *Summer Exhibition 1973*'s early closure can be ascertained from both the documentation notes for *Summer Exhibition 1973* and *CCP Mixed Exhibition*, both of which make brief remarks about the other. While notes for *Summer Exhibition 1973* already include a claim that it was “replaced by something...more appropriate for the National Artists Awards ceremonies and Van Cliburn concerts,” notes for *CCP Mixed Exhibition* also explicitly state, “For two occasions (National Artists Awards and the visit of Van Cliburn) an exhibition which combined old and new works was installed. There was no definite theme, except the fact that it provided a glimpse of both works of the past and the present. This was installed right after Summer Exhibition 1973 ended.”³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ In 1976, Albano started to organize the CCP Annual, an annual, encyclopedic exhibition of works from each year that seemed to replace some of the initial goals of the CCP Summer Exhibition.

³⁶⁷ Exhibition Notes for *CCP Mixed Exhibition*, Documentation of Exhibitions, Main Gallery (1973), Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

The repetition in the exhibition notes reflect Albano's discomfort that the more avant-garde *Summer Exhibition 1973* was changed to *CCP Mixed Exhibition* for the specific, nationalist occasions. *CCP Mixed Exhibition*, as its name implies, included a mix of “conventional” and “advanced” art. In other words, the *CCP Mixed Exhibition* was less about the viewer's participation and multi-sensorial involvement with the work, but passive visual consumption appropriate for official purposes. The exhibition had been thrown together to “give the public a chance to see ‘milestones’ in Philippine art.”³⁶⁸ The exhibition, however, did not necessarily exclude the young artists who took part of *Summer Exhibition 1973*. *CCP Mixed Exhibition* included Bautista's *Installation*—a work made of piles of black sand hand-poured in a grid formation on the ground—as an example of “advanced” art.³⁶⁹ Although *CCP Mixed Exhibition* did not completely denounce avant-garde art, the exhibition—as a replacement to the more experimental *Summer Exhibition 1973*—confirmed desire for the passive and encyclopedic presentation of Philippine art as the appropriate backdrop for official occasions.

The CCP summer exhibitions during the early 1970s moved increasingly towards art that consisted of found objects and discards over more conventional art forms. Documentation notes of the summer exhibitions from 1970 to 1973 showed a growing disdain towards the majority of Philippine abstraction, which obscured or fragmented reality. Documentation further suggests that younger artists displayed the mundane materials of the world as it was—smelly, monotonous and sometimes rotten—a gesture that appeared to contrast with the grandiose claims of Imelda for the CCP. While artists such as Laudico or Bautista did not intentionally picture themselves as political dissidents, their works alluded to the reality of a material world alternative to the

³⁶⁸ Exhibition Notes for *CCP Mixed Exhibition*.

³⁶⁹ Exhibition Notes for *CCP Mixed Exhibition*.

pristine and fictional one created by Imelda—a straightforward, honest, unstable world countering the secretive control of Marcos regime.

Though discussion of social realism has dominated Philippine art history as the primary and most potent form of protest art against the Marcos regime, a more nuanced form of realism had been taking place in the CCP with these “avant-garde” artists. These artists highlighted the potential of everyday to encourage viewers active engagement in art, freeing art from the tyranny of the Marcoses’ control. By using easily accessible materials, these artists, unlike the social realist counterparts, denied paint—an expensive medium associated with colonialism—the primacy it had in the prior decade. *Summer Exhibition 1973* would be the last one during the early years of the CCP. Many of the artists who participated in the CCP summer exhibitions would take part in Shop 6—a temporary exhibition space that occupied a small shop space—the following year.³⁷⁰ As artists who were interested in mundane objects, it does seem fitting that they moved their exhibitions into mundane spaces.

Finding Shop 6: The Rise of Alternative Art Galleries

In a 1990s interview with members of Shop 6, Chabet described an exhibition at Lahi Gallery as the catalyst that led to the space.³⁷¹ Titled *Basta Hindi Ganon* (That’s Not How It Is), the exhibition took place in the recently opened gallery in the working-class neighborhood of Cubao, situated in Quezon City, Metro Manila. *Basta Hindi Ganon* occurred one year after the last CCP summer exhibition and included work by Bautista, Chabet, Gan, Laudico, Modesto and

³⁷⁰ While *Summer Exhibition 1973* was the last summer exhibition in the 1970s, large-scale exhibitions of this sort began again in 1976 when Albano began to hold the *CCP Annual*. The *CCP Annual* was different from the summer exhibitions as it tended towards a wider variety of artists and representation of the art ecosystem in Manila.

³⁷¹ Roberto Chabet Interview with Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Onsite-Access Only.

Boy Perez. [fig. 3.2] Its unusual invitation—twelve lines of childish scrawl written in red crayon on a scrap of lined paper—foretold of the unconventional contents of the exhibition.³⁷² The short-lived exhibition opened on April 19, 1974 and closed the day after—supposedly due to some of its questionable contents. According to Chabet, Corito Araneta Kalaw, co-owner of *Sining Kamalig* (Storehouse of Art), “heard about” *Basta Hindi Ganon* and its premature closing. She was “amused” and offered the artists an empty stall space near the gallery that newspapers billed as *Sining Kamalig Extension—Shop 6*.³⁷³

Basta Hindi Ganon took place at Lahi Gallery—one of many art spaces to open in Metro Manila in the 1970s. Since the founding of Philippine Art Gallery (PAG) in the 1950s, Manila had established a modest roster of gallery and artist-run spaces, including the Luz Gallery, Solidaridad, Print Gallery, Sanctuary, and *Sining Kamalig*. While many conceptual artists exhibited in the CCP through the 1970s, these galleries and alternative spaces also became critical points for conceptual art to develop. Many of these commercial galleries naturally formed for financial interests and gain. Luz, proprietor of the eponymous Luz Gallery, matter-of-factly stated, “An art gallery is a business primarily. It has other functions, of course, but if a gallery is professional, it should make money.”³⁷⁴ Yet, though major commercial galleries such as Luz Gallery and Solidaridad maintained solid exhibition schedules with established artists, less conventional spaces such as *Sining Kamalig* accommodated younger artists and more experimental programing, often to the detriment of profit. In fact, art columnist Angel G. De

³⁷² Joy Dayrit, *Notes on Shop 6*, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, accessed August 23, 2017, <http://www.aaa.org.hk/en/collection/search/archive/the-chabet-archive-other-documents/object/notes-on-shop-6/>. In Dayrit’s notes on Shop 6, she writes that the “invitation to the Lahi exhibition” was “written by a child, Chabet’s nephew...on a sheet of Grade 2 pad paper.”

³⁷³ Roberto Chabet Interview with Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Onsite-Access Only.

³⁷⁴ Chiqui Rialp Locsin, “Fine Weather in the Art World,” *Woman’s Home Companion*, January 24, 1974.

Jesus suggested that Sining Kamalig had a “splendid record of launching the careers of younger ‘name’ artists. In its operation, the profit motive appears to be completely subordinated to the promotion and progressive development of Philippine art.”³⁷⁵

One of the earliest experimental galleries (and one that failed to profit) in Metro Manila was Joy Dayrit’s Print Gallery. As discussed in the prior chapter, Chabet exhibited his first experimentations with found objects at Print Gallery as part of the Liwayway Recapping Co. shortly after his return from the Rockefeller grant. Chabet and Dayrit met while he was still the museum director of the CCP when she had contacted him for help on a Juan Arellano exhibition at Print Gallery.³⁷⁶ Though Print Gallery was rather short-lived—the gallery only lasted from 1968 to 1970—Dayrit continued to be involved with the experimental art scene through her friendship with Chabet and her involvement with Shop 6. Chabet’s Liwayway Recapping Co. exhibition at Print Gallery resembled that of Shop 6 a few years later—intentionally short-lived, playful, and filled with everyday objects. Like *Basta Hindi Ganon* at Lahi Gallery, the Liwayway Recapping Co. exhibition was only up for a single evening, making it closer to an event, a party, or a performance than an exhibition.

Although Dayrit had hoped to have a second iteration of Print Gallery, it never came into fruition. As she mourned the eternal loss of her gallery, she expressed her support for Liwayway Recapping Co. in her journal, writing:

The Liwayway Recapping Co., the non-serious group of ‘non-artists’, I am rooting for them... They’re non-serious, and therefore uninhibited attitude towards art. This attitude causes them to work more freely, without inhibition, without fear of hurting themselves

³⁷⁵ Angel G. De Jesus, “On Galleries—Of Different Kinds,” *Business Day*, November 14, 1975.

³⁷⁶ Joy Dayrit Journals, May 7, 1969. Ateneo Library of Women’s Writings (ALIWW), Envelope 1.1.

and their vocation (art), with indifference towards criticism and what people will say, and with a whole lot of fun.³⁷⁷

In her journal, Dayrit highlighted an important strategy adopted by conceptual artists: non-seriousness. Since non-seriousness permitted artists to “work without inhibition” or “fear of hurting themselves,” artists could examine and critique local, lived realities without the anxiety of artistic failure or political repercussion as they could simply remark that they were joking. Dayrit keenly observed that Liwayway’s blasé attitude and choice of non-art objects gave their work the potential to carefully glide under the radar. Though often dismissed as *pakulo* or gimmickry, artists such as Chabet and Albano—who also took part in Liwayway Recapping Co.—gained attention and support in local galleries and the CCP as both artists and administrators. By bringing the literal detritus of the outside world into the gallery space, they seem to poke fun of seriousness of austere art spaces—such as the CCP.

After Print Gallery closed, other galleries continued to proliferate throughout Metro Manila in the mid-1970s. These galleries served not only as exhibition spaces, but also hang out spots for artists to gather and exchange ideas. In 1974, for example, Gallery and After Six opened as the first gallery/café in the posh Makati neighborhood while Lahi Gallery was established in up-and-coming, but working class Cubao.³⁷⁸ Lahi Gallery was the brainchild of Judy Araneta Roxas and Loretta Lichauco. The former was from a wealthy family that possessed property in that part of Metro Manila, and the latter, a gallerist who already owned commercial

³⁷⁷ Joy Dayrit Journals, September 15, 1970. Ateneo Library of Women’s Writings (ALIWW), Envelope 1.1.

³⁷⁸ For more information on Gallery and After Six, see: M.J. Bateria, “Gallery & After 6,” *Philippine Panorama*, March 3, 1974, 18. Chabet, in discussion with Francesca Enriquez, also describes Lahi Gallery as “that gallery was one of those pretentious places that had coffee shops, which had poetry readings.”

gallery in Manila.³⁷⁹ According to an article in *Philippine Panorama*, the two founders wanted to conceive an art gallery that rejected the “elitist trappings of art altogether” because they felt “convinced that art is a social and human need and activity...not a commercial or social privilege.”³⁸⁰ By bringing an art gallery into the blue collar area, Roxas and Lichauco hoped to “create an atmosphere in which the public will accept art as part of their everyday life.”³⁸¹

The same *Panorama* article also briefly alluded to *Basta Hindi Ganon* as an exhibition of “environmental sculptures” by “Chabet and friends.”³⁸² As part of its mission to encourage the people to “accept art as a part of...everyday life,” Lahi Gallery welcomed artists who proposed everyday detritus as art to evoke art’s association with life. Installation photographs from *Basta Hindi Ganon* document some of the works exhibited by Laudico, Chabet, and Modesto.

Laudico’s “oil painting”—made from crude oil dipped manuscript paper—dominated an entire expanse of wall on one side of the gallery. Her other work, an assortment of black twigs tangled in a clear fishing net, hovered precariously above the “oil painting.” Below her installation of twigs was Chabet’s contribution to *Basta Hindi Ganon*: a long bamboo rod suspended with thick white rope knotted around its center. Chabet called the work *God*. On the floor of the gallery, Modesto exhibited a large desk fan he had found in a nearby rubbish bin. He connected the fan to a transparent tube and ribbons of cassette tape placed on an unfurled of reel of white paper. Once filled with air from the fan, the chute would inflate and a cut out image of Richard Nixon would blow around inside of it.³⁸³

³⁷⁹ Rina B. Jimenez, “How Culture Came to Cubao,” *Philippine Panorama*, May 12, 1974, 15.

³⁸⁰ Jimenez, “How Culture Came to Cubao,” 15.

³⁸¹ Jimenez, “How Culture Came to Cubao,” 15.

³⁸² Jimenez, “How Culture Came to Cubao,” 15.

³⁸³ Fernando Modesto, Interview with author in his home, 2015, Manila, Philippines.

As discussed earlier in the chapter, Laudico began to incorporate crude oil in her art practices as a student at U.P.-Diliman. Crude oil was not the only quotidian material she included in these oil paintings. Instead of purchasing new batches of white paper, she used paper that already had text on them such as mimeographed pages from books. To create the oil painting in Lahi Gallery, the artist carefully tore pages out of a book (not unlike Chabet's performance of *Tearing to Pieces*) and dipped the paper leaves into oil accrued from gasoline stations. She then placed the stain pages directly on the gallery wall to form a large, rectangular surface.³⁸⁴ Though Laudico ripped out the pages close to the book's spine, the rough edges of the torn pages reveal pieces of wall as the imperfect—and disparately sized—rectangles failed to fit snugly together. The pages also absorbed the black oil in varying degrees; the differentiations in color remained noticeable across the distinct pieces of paper. **[fig. 3.3]** The diverse size and color of the rectangular components in Laudico's "oil painting" produced an off-kilter grid that retained a visibly fragmented surface.

Like she had been with *This is How Air is Strained*, Laudico seemed interested in how her materials morphed over time, though this time over a longer period than just the duration of the exhibition. "In the long run," she remarked, "the paper turned to black."³⁸⁵ **[fig. 3.4]** A part of the work is still displayed in her home. Yet, during the exhibition, most of the repurposed paper contained text that remained visible. The words darkened by the oil on paper emerged like rows of iterated lines, their meaning obfuscated and inconsequential. Text becomes just another material to produce images. They converge into lines that vaguely mimic those created by the

³⁸⁴ Yolanda Laudico Interview with Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Onsite-Access Only. In this interview, Laudico remarked, "Imagine the whole wall, I stuck the paper stained with back coal to the wall...it stained the wall so Lahi was angry since it was a fire hazard...In the long run the paper turned to black."

³⁸⁵ Laudico, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

sticks above them, though the ones on paper retain a horizontal order, unlike the randomness of the twigs above them. Since some of the sheets of paper are darker than others, some of the text pasted on the wall remain legible, drawing the viewer to come closer to the painting and attempt to catch a phrase off the wall. Similar to other works exhibited in *Basta Hindi Ganon*, Laudico's "oil painting" asked the viewer to continually come closer and to look more carefully.

Laudico asserted that the "oil painting" at Lahi Gallery occupied a whole wall. "So one whole wall. Imagine the whole wall, I stuck paper stained with black coal to the wall," she exclaimed.³⁸⁶ The "oil painting" functioned more like wallpaper than a painting. Its size dominated a large expanse of wall, and while a small perimeter was retained around the painting, it lacked a distinct frame. More importantly, Laudico had stuck the sheets of oily paper "directly on the wall" with tar.³⁸⁷ According to the artist, the paper left tar stains on the wall that upset the proprietors; the gallery owners felt concerned about the fire hazard created by the residual marks.

While Roxas and Lichauco might have expressed desire to create an atmosphere in which art appeared to be a part of everyday experience, in actuality, they seemed threatened by artwork that physically stained real space, remaining long past its welcome from an organized exhibition. Despite leaving unacceptable blemishes on the gallery wall, Laudico's "oil painting" also visualized how artistic experimentation operated in Manila; the work retained clear, crisp perimeters in spite of the torn edges and misalignment present in its internal grid. In other words, while artists were encouraged to develop "avant-garde" or experimental works that extended into the everyday, their artworks continued to be bounded by institutional expectation regarding medium.

³⁸⁶ Laudico, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

³⁸⁷ Laudico, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

[fig. 3.5] Laudico's other work in *Basta Hindi Ganon*— a collection of twigs soaked in the same crude oil tangled in a suspended fishing net—also distressed the gallery owners. The artist used a transparent fishing net for the installation so that from afar, the twigs appeared as if they were floating in air.³⁸⁸ She noted that she chose twigs because she was fascinated by how their forms appeared “random” because they came from nature.³⁸⁹ The form of the twigs was not the only random element in the installation. Before the opening of the exhibition, much to the chagrin of the gallery owners, the artist hung up the fishing net and proceeded to “play”—that was, to throw oily twigs at it. The ones that caught on the net “formed themselves into a pattern” and remained on the net as part of the installation.³⁹⁰

While Laudico dictated the parameters for how the work would be made, the “finished” work depended on criterion outside of the artist's control. Laudico's action also caused further discomfort, as the gallery owners continued to grow nervous about the oil splatters staining their new venue; Laudico's oil works presented the threat of art that continued to persist in real space.³⁹¹ The transparency of the fishing net created another threat; it offered the twigs the appearance of tumbling bramble placed just above Laudico's oil painting. The physical tension between the translucent net and the weight of the twigs remained invisible above the oil stained expanse of paper. The tension that was tangible, however, was the immediacy of the twig's capacity to tumble towards a viewer whose curiosity surpassed his or her fear of being smacked by an errant twig.

³⁸⁸ Laudico, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

³⁸⁹ Laudico, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

³⁹⁰ Laudico, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

³⁹¹ Laudico, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

Like Laudico, Modesto also used found objects in his installations due to the steep price of paint. He stressed that as an artist, if you used “oil and canvas, you have paint, that’s expensive, you need to buy it, then you’d do it seriously, right? So there are ideas and if the found object can solve the problem, why not?” Modesto expressed that using inexpensive materials—such as found objects—allowed artists to experiment without concern of financial recuperation necessary for expensive paintings. Using materials found cheaply or freely not only meant that artists could explore ideas that lacked commercial appeal, but also permitted artists to create artworks quickly with minimal labor. This allowed artists to keep up with the rate of production required by Shop 6’s goals of producing weekly exhibitions. Modesto noted that part of what “pushed” him to keep working under Shop 6 was the “pressure to exhibit every week, so you’re pressured to think of an idea.”³⁹²

[fig. 3.6] For his installation at *Basta Hindi Ganon*, Modesto noted that he acquired his materials by rummaging through garbage bins near the Gallery a few days before the exhibition opened.³⁹³ In the detritus, he found a cream-colored table fan and some cassette tapes that he ended up unraveling for his installation. Modesto then tied ribbons of cassette tape onto the fan and placed it on top of a rectangle of white paper, which demarcated the space around his fan. He then enclosed the cassette ribbons in a plastic tube that would inflate when the fan was blowing air through it. Modesto described it as “an electric fan with a picture of Nixon inside the

³⁹² Fernando Modesto Interview with Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Onsite-Access Only. The pressure most likely came from the collection of artists themselves to create and generate new ideas by mounting new exhibitions rather than commercial concerns. The production of new exhibitions also meant that the artists had an excuse to have opening night parties every week. Modesto states, “So during the week we’d see each other because we had openings. It was a good reason for drinking! Ha!” Furthermore, Laudico remarks in the same collection of interviews that since the artists did not pay rent for the shop space, there was no “pressure” to sell their works to maintain the space.

³⁹³ Fernando Modesto Interview with author in his home, 2015, Manila, Philippines.

plastic...There was regular plastic that I formed into a cylinder.”³⁹⁴ The picture of Nixon was also accompanied by “popcorn” that flurried around the plastic tube.³⁹⁵

Though the transparent plastic left the cylinder’s internal contents visible, the blowing fan obscured the items in the cylinder because it caused the objects to constantly move and appear blurry. The placement of the fan on the ground also shrouded the work’s political reference because forced the viewer to bend over and inspect the transparent tube to recognize the visual reference to Nixon. While works at the CCP’s summer exhibition displayed work in a “straightforward” and “honest” manner, objects in *Basta Hindi Ganon—That’s Not How It Is*—asked spectators to approach and look carefully at mundane objects to see what might be concealed. Modesto’s decision to include Nixon in his work also brushed close to political commentary. Modesto remarked, “I did this work during the height of the news on Watergate. Of course I got a reaction, but then that was my intention.”³⁹⁶ Modesto further stated, however, that despite the works being “political” they were definitively not “Social Realism,” drawing a distinction between the kind of representation done by members of Shop 6 and their social realist counterparts.³⁹⁷

Modesto was not the only artist who used images of controversial heads of state at *Basta Hindi Ganon*. At the front of the gallery—not pictured in the installation shots depicted in the photographs—Bautista placed a refrigerator that contained small, cut-out images of the Marcoses inside. Called *Refrigerator*, Dayrit described this work in her personal notes on Shop 6 as

³⁹⁴ Fernando Modesto Interview with Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Onsite-Access Only.

³⁹⁵ Modesto, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

³⁹⁶ Modesto, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

³⁹⁷ Modesto, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

“bottled collages refrigerated and frozen.”³⁹⁸ Within the refrigerator, which the artist had co-opted from its functional purpose at the gallery/cafe, Bautista arranged a collection of used Gerber and Nescafe bottles. Inside these repurposed bottles, Bautista placed “collages” consisting of clippings from magazines, scraps from calendars and various remnants of his childhood paraphernalia alongside the aforementioned cut-out images of then President Ferdinand Marcos and First Lady Imelda Marcos.³⁹⁹

Bautista situated the refrigerator so close to the door that it nearly blocked entry to the gallery. In fact, Chabet noted that Bautista’s refrigerator was placed “right smack in the doorway” and that “in order to get inside the gallery...you had to inch yourself [in].”⁴⁰⁰ Similar to Modesto’s fan, Bautista’s refrigerator required bodily contortion to navigate around his installation—in this situation, viewers had to physically engage with the artwork to gain access to the exhibition. Its unusual placement drew attention to the physical presence of the household appliance, forcing an encounter between an inanimate object and the viewer’s body as they inched into space. The odd position of the refrigerator also encouraged viewers to consider it as art installation rather than a functioning appliance. This enticed viewers to open the refrigerator and freely examine its contents in a manner that might have been inappropriate, or even voyeuristic, if Bautista had chosen a more conventional place for the appliance. Referring to

³⁹⁸ Joy Dayrit, Notes on Shop 6, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, accessed August 23, 2017, <http://www.aaa.org.hk/en/collection/search/archive/the-chabet-archive-other-documents/object/notes-on-shop-6/>.

³⁹⁹ Joe Bautista in discussion with author, 2015, Manila, Philippines.

⁴⁰⁰ Roberto Chabet at Talking Shop: Roberto Chabet at Lopez Museum, August 6, 2011, audio, Lopez Museum Library and Archives.

Refrigerator, Chabet even observes that “the tendency was to open the icebox” after one had “squeeze[ed]... between the icebox and the door.”⁴⁰¹

Once people opened the refrigerator, however, they did not immediately experience visual reference to the Marcoses. Chabet states, “Some of [the bottles] were very moldy and some were placed inside the freezer. If you looked close enough, you would see that inside the bottles were pictures of Marcos. You must remember that this was right after Martial Law...If you don’t look hard enough you won’t see the picture.”⁴⁰² Bautista also noted that he wrapped some of these moldy bottles in plastic wrap to further obfuscate visual references.⁴⁰³ Like Modesto’s fan, *Refrigerator* required the viewer to closely examine the bottle to identify their contents and obscure reference to the Marcoses. One would not only have to look closely through the plastic wrapped, mold-ridden surface of the bottles, but would also have to overcome the musty smell of residual milk and baby food in the bottles to peer close enough to see the image of the Marcoses.

Far from a prestigious portrait of the couple, *Refrigerator* enshrouded them amidst a collection of abject and smelly things. That the bottles mixed collages of not only references to the Marcoses, but remnants Modesto’s visual culture and memory—including those from his childhood—suggested that Marcos’ authoritarianism was experienced through mundane everyday incidences rather than over-arching, consistent oppression. In response, Bautista might have found satisfaction, or glee, in displaying the Marcoses in such a dishonorable fashion. Yet,

⁴⁰¹ Roberto Chabet Interview with Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Onsite-Access Only.

⁴⁰² Chabet, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

⁴⁰³ Joe Bautista in discussion with author, 2015, Manila, Philippines.

years after Ferdinand's deposition, Bautista remarked, "I don't know that time if what I was doing was a political statement."⁴⁰⁴

Political or not, though *Refrigerator* was the only work that directly alluded to the Marcoses, it was not perceived as the "objectionable" work that prematurely shut down *Basta Hindi Ganon*. In another installation, Bautista had displayed a number of used clothes—mainly panties and jockeys—folded neatly in cellophane packages "like they were new."⁴⁰⁵ He placed them at the front window of the gallery, arranging them in a way that, according to Chabet, "emphasized the crotch."⁴⁰⁶ Since Lahi Gallery was in a place that "had some clothing shops," Bautista's front display "sort of imitated that, with clothes."⁴⁰⁷ By positioning the cellophane wrapped clothes at the front window, the artist intimated the gallery as the purveyor of used undergarments.

According to an interview conducted by Francesca Enriquez in the 1990s and a public conversation between Shop 6 artists at the Lopez Museum in 2011, among other later interviews with the artists, the provocative nature of Bautista's panty display caused the exhibition to close early.⁴⁰⁸ Chabet remarked that the artists "received a very strong letter" that demanded the

⁴⁰⁴ Joe Bautista Interview with Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Onsite-Access Only.

⁴⁰⁵ Roberto Chabet Interview with Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Onsite-Access Only.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Roberto Chabet at Talking Shop: Roberto Chabet at Lopez Museum, August 6, 2011, audio, Lopez Museum Library and Archives.

⁴⁰⁸ In Chabet's interview with Enriquez in the 1990s, he remarked, "Another thing, which I think they found objectionable about the show was, Joe had these old clothes, mainly underwear, panties and jockeys and then they were folded very neatly and packed in cellophane wrappers like they were being sold. But they looked old and they were packed in such a way that most of them emphasized the crotch and they were neatly packed in cellophane like they were new. I think the idea of Joe was, this place was like a store in Fiesta Carnival and he displayed this in one of the windows so that from the outside you would think it was a store that sells underwear or clothes. After the opening we got a very strong letter that we had to do something about the exhibition because they were objectionable. So instead of removing what they thought was objectionable we just removed everything. We just folded up. And the people started talking about this one-day exhibition." In 2011, Chabet re-affirmed this statement

removal of Bautista's playful window display and other "objectionable" work. Bautista's display of panties apparently too uncomfortably resembled and blended in with the commercial storefronts around Lahi Gallery, making it appear as if the gallery actually sold old underwear. Instead of removing the offensive work, the artists instead chose to de-install the entire show. Chabet stated, "We just folded up. And people started talking about this one-day exhibition."⁴⁰⁹

A letter from the Lahi Association addressed to Chabet (by his last name as Mr. Rodriguez) dated April 21, 1974 paints a different picture than the one above. While the artists claimed that the request to remove Bautista's "objectionable" and "obscene" installation from the exhibition caused artists to scrap the entire exhibition in solidarity, this letter included a change in contract terms for a variety of boring reasons, including "the exhibit is not money earning" and that the "receptionist is threatening to resign because of the ill-treatment she has received."⁴¹⁰ The letter further expressed, "That we cannot use the premises at all for other purposes of the Association. (Including not being allowed to use the air conditioner and the refrigerator)."⁴¹¹ This last point most likely referred to Bautista's co-opting of the gallery's kitchen appliance.

While the presumed obscenity of Bautista's panties might have led to one of the terms for the contract that specified "exhibiting artists shall be liable for any moral damage caused by the exhibit," the terms focused primarily around the costs of the physical alterations and financial

at a group interview at Lopez Museum. He noted that the day after opening, he received a letter "saying there were some materials in the exhibition that were found obscene." Chabet, Laudico, and Bautista suggests that the controversial work was Joe Bautista's installation of used undergarments because "this was a mall shop, it had some clothing shops, and they were putting all kinds of items on the window so Joe sort of imitated that, with clothes."

⁴⁰⁹ Roberto Chabet Interview with Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Onsite-Access Only.

⁴¹⁰ Letter addressed to Mr. Roberto Chabet Rodriguez, dated April 21, 1974 from Lahi Association.

⁴¹¹ Letter addressed to Mr. Roberto Chabet Rodriguez.

aspects of the exhibition.⁴¹² The contract demonstrated concern for the state of the gallery space. One of the terms noted that “any change of the existing set-up, renovation, or removal of any part of the gallery and the restoration of the said changes shall be the responsibility of the artists.”⁴¹³ The contract further stated that the Gallery would collect a “25% commission on whatever sales are made with a minimum of P500.00 sales.” If the terms were not met, according to the letter, the association “kindly request [the] group to take down the exhibit the following day.”⁴¹⁴ As discussed above, instead of trying to meet these terms, the artists decided to take down the exhibition.

Although another letter—one that called for removal of Bautista’s panties—might have existed, the letter and contract terms discussed above most certainly contributed to the hasty removal of *Basta Ganon Hindi*. Despite that the gallery owners claimed art as “not a commercial or social privilege,” in the end, financial considerations played an important role in shutting down the exhibition.⁴¹⁵ In recalling the extreme brevity of this exhibition, however, Chabet and his co-conspirators preferred a claim that their installations were too controversial and uncomfortable for public consumption. Yet, instead of calling out an installation like *Refrigerator*—which explicitly contained images of the Marcoses—as the offending work, they suggested a display of used underwear had the potential to be more objectionable. In these artists’ memory, art’s threat was not its ability to conjure up politically loaded imagery like the

⁴¹² Unsigned Exhibition Agreement Contract accompanying Letter addressed to Mr. Roberto Chabet Rodriguez, dated April 21, 1974 from Lahi Association.

⁴¹³ Unsigned Exhibition Agreement Contract

⁴¹⁴ Unsigned Exhibition Agreement Contract

⁴¹⁵ Rina B. Jimenez, “How Culture Came to Cubao,” *Philippine Panorama*, May 12, 1974, 15.

Social Realists artist, but the subtler capacity to resemble real life and affirm the potential for another reality full of impropriety.

Inaugurating Sining Kamalig Extension (Shop 6)

Shortly after artists folded up *Basta Ganon Hindi* at Lahi Gallery, Korito Araneta Kalaw, co-owner of *Sining Kamalig* (Storehouse of Art), heard about the exhibition and offered the artists a stall space near the gallery at no cost.⁴¹⁶ *Sining Kamalig*, which Kalaw ran with her sister Vida Araneta Balboa, was located in a commercial center constructed in front of their family compound. According to discussion of the gallery in *Women's Home Companion*, *Sining Kamalig's* neighbors included "a haute couture salon, a beauty parlor, textile outlets, furniture and antique shops, and a restaurant."⁴¹⁷ The Gallery's vibrant surroundings drew in a "large walk-in crowd daily" and its patrons consisted of "interior designers and art aficionados who acquire paintings, prints, or sculpture."⁴¹⁸ The article also noted that since *Sining Kamalig* also exhibited more established artists such as Abueva and Jaime de Guzman, "hard core art collectors" also frequented the gallery.⁴¹⁹

Despite its affiliation to *Sining Kamalig*, Shop 6 was treated as an independent, experimental space for artists to mount brief exhibitions.⁴²⁰ *Manila Times* billed Shop 6 as "Sining Kamalig Extension: Shop 6" under their list of ongoing exhibitions and qualified the art

⁴¹⁶ *Sining Kamalig* was a gallery located within the arcade, but separate from it. Corito Kalaw also owned the gallery. In newspaper listings, Shop 6 was sometimes listed as *Shop 6: Sining Kamalig Extension*. *Sining Kamalig* would also go on to exhibit works by Shop 6 artists in the mid-70s.

⁴¹⁷ Chiqui Rialp Locsin, "Fine Weather in the Art World," *Woman's Home Companion*, January 24, 1974.

⁴¹⁸ Locsin, "Fine Weather in the Art World."

⁴¹⁹ Locsin, "Fine Weather in the Art World."

⁴²⁰ Modesto remarked in his interview with Enriquez that while "Sining Kamalig...showed regular painting that sells...Shop 6 was another alternative venue."

shown at the space as “experimental works.”⁴²¹ Shop 6 opened with two inaugural group shows; the first opened on May 31, 1974 with a group exhibition by Yolanda Johnson, Eva Toledo, Alan Rivera, Red Mansueto, and Danny Dalena. The following weekend, Rodolfo Gan, Nap Jamir, Fernando Modesto, Nestor Vinluan, Roberto Chabet and Boy-and-Berna Perez exhibited.⁴²² Following the two inaugural group shows, artists presented solo exhibitions that began with an opening on Friday afternoon and closed at the end of the weekend, for what the press claimed would culminate to a total of fourteen weekly exhibitions.⁴²³ The press release expressed that the exhibitions would “feature mixed-media works, constructions, situations, environments, and other ‘exploratory’ projects.”⁴²⁴

Among the found objects and strange installations featured in the first inaugural group exhibition included Red Mansueto’s red-painted dilapidated bed; Danny Dalena’s assortment of kitchen vessels under a piece of eroding galvanized iron; Bautista’s various grids made from mongo seeds, banana flowers, and sago seeds; Alan Rivera’s child-sized hanger collages; Eva Toledo’s window-pasted paper collage, and Laudico’s grid of “Photo-Me” cut-outs. Several photographs in the Chabet Archive document this first exhibition. **[fig. 3.7]** From a moderate distance, Shop 6’s brightly lit storefront, consisting of two large windows and an open door, disrupt the darkness of the surrounding area. Peering into Shop 6, we see the collapsed bedframe with no mattress alongside an assortment of pots and pans arranged haphazardly on the gallery floor. A tidy row of Rivera’s hangers juts out of the wall on a rod above the unfortunate

⁴²¹ See Rene R. Castillo, “Gallery of Galleries,” *Business Day*, 18, Article #33 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc.

⁴²² Press release of the Shop 6 inaugural exhibition at Sining Kamalig, 1974, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Online Access: <http://www.aaa.org.hk/Collection/CollectionOnline/SpecialCollectionItem/8342>.

⁴²³ Press release of the Shop 6 inaugural exhibition at Sining Kamalig.

⁴²⁴ Press release of the Shop 6 inaugural exhibition at Sining Kamalig.

bedframe. Grid formations made from Bautista's accumulation of mongo seeds and Laudico's photo machine discards adorn the window and wall respectively, creating small forms of order among natural and man-made detritus.

Unlike the artists in Liwayway Recapping Co., who collaborated on installations and situations under the group name, artists involved in Shop 6 maintained individual authorship over their contributions to the exhibition. *Basta Ganon Hindi*, for example, included discrete works by artists meant to operate separately from one another. Yet, while each artist produced the individual elements of Shop 6's first group show, the exhibition contained no wall text to demarcate their respective contributions. Instead, all of the works functioned together to create a scene of a stark bedroom or cell filled with decrepit household things in a strange arrangement.

[fig. 3.8] Before the viewer enters the gallery, two windows and open door trifurcate the view of the works inside. Similar to his array of used panties at Lahi Gallery, Bautista's mongo seed grid—one of three comprising *Mais*—continued the artist's penchant to use the window as an important site of display. As part of *Mais*, he used scotch tape to affix sago seeds, banana flowers and mongo seeds—each in unique grids—to the glass pane of the door, the back wall, and the front display of the Shop 6, respectively.⁴²⁵ The largest configuration was the mongo seeds taped on one of the gallery's front windows. This time, instead of using the window as a way to frame his installation, he used the transparent pane of glass as its physical support. To the viewer gazing through the window, the gridded mongo seeds overlay order atop the disarray of broken furniture and worn-out kitchenware. The seeds also mirror the other methodical grids—such as the banana flowers and Photo-Id machine discards—pasted on the wall at the far end of Shop 6. While Bautista retained a distinct border around the mongo seed grid, the transparency

⁴²⁵ Joy Dayrit, Notes on Shop 6, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, accessed August 23, 2017, <http://www.aaa.org.hk/en/collection/search/archive/the-chabet-archive-other-documents/object/notes-on-shop-6/>.

of the window permits *Mais* to be absorbed into works inside the gallery as some of its mongo seeds blend into the objects behind them.

Through the left window, immediately beyond the mongo seeds, are Mansueto's rickety red-painted bedframe and Rivera's child-sized hanger collages.⁴²⁶ To the side of the bed, under Toledo's pasted window collage, are Dalena's vessels and a meandering line of small plastic cups behind a glass jug. One of the larger white bowls on the floor next to the bed bears semblance to a bedpan. Together, these objects and the seedy condition of the room evoke a sparse prison cell. The mongo and sago seeds, carefully taped in rows on the glass at the front of the gallery, mimics a method of keeping track of time under such conditions as the imprisoned person makes a minor mark for the passage of each day. All of these objects contribute to the illusion of a pitiable makeshift living space made visible to the errant posh passerby through the large-scale windows—a site for unintentional and uncomfortable voyeurism.

From a distance, Mansueto's lopsided bedframe initially looks as if it collapsed due to structural difficulties of bearing too much weight. It slopes like a slide towards Shop 6's storefront as its front legs have broken from the main body of the frame. [fig. 3.9] At the other end of the bed, towards the back wall of Shop 6, the bedframe's other set of legs continue to support its wooden slates, an asymmetry that causes the bed to tilt towards the ground. Yet, upon closer observation, what appears to be an accident caused by the wear and tear of overuse becomes a theatrical staging of hardship. One the bedframe's detached legs has been decisively placed atop the slates—an impossible position if the legs had simply given out under the weight of a mattress or its occupant. While the viewer initially believes the bedframe to be broken, closer examination causes one to feel mildly deceived by the fact that the dilapidated bedframe is

⁴²⁶ Dayrit, Notes on Shop 6. In her *Notes on Shop 6*, Dayrit noted that Mansueto displayed "a half-collapsed single bed painted red."

actually a construction of indigence rather than the reality of it. The illusion is further shattered by the color of the bed—a painted red that announces the bedframe as a work of art rather than a mere piece of furniture.

[fig. 3.10] On the ground next to the bedframe are an assortment of vessels that further create the impression of an impoverished living space. Besides the bedpan-like bowl, this eclectic collection of containers includes a glass jug, plastic cups, a rectangular ice-tray, among other things that resemble pots or the interior of rice cookers. The variety of containers resemble a makeshift kitchen and bathroom condensed into a few choice containers, further supporting the illusion of Shop 6 as a crude living space. Dayrit described Dalena’s collection of vessels as resembling “all sorts of garbage thrown from the rooftops [of a] slum or squatter area.”⁴²⁷ Though not visible in the documentation photographs, Dayrit observed that each of these objects were attached with white nylon thread to Dalena’s eroding galvanized iron hanging above them. She suggested that the nylon strings allude to the “drops of rainwater from [a] leaky roof.”⁴²⁸ The arrangement of pots, pans, and little plastic cups in the middle of the ground sustain the semblance of poverty because they look like containers meant to catch water seeping from a damaged roof.

Rivera’s collage hangers further contribute to the fiction of a destitute living space. **[fig. 3.11]** While the collages initially seem to dangle directly above the bedframe, photographs documenting the inside of the exhibition space shows the rod angling away from Mansueto’s work. Similar to Mansueto’s bedframe, the hangers are also impractical. Not only does Rivera fill the inside of the hangers with collages, but their small size renders them un-functional for

⁴²⁷ Dayrit, Notes on Shop 6.

⁴²⁸ Dayrit, Notes on Shop 6.

adult use. Instead of using the usual adult sized hangers, Rivera constructed his collage series out of toddler or baby sized hangers. Like Bautista's bottle collages of *Basta Hindi Ganon*, they require closer looking as they face into the wall. Despite their lack of functionality, the shapes of the toddler hangers simulate a bare bones rack of miniature clothing, drawing attention to the bleakness of the space; the presence of the spare rod accentuates the lack of closet space or furniture—such as an armoire—in the room.

[fig. 3.12] Next to Bautista's banana flower *Mais* grid, a small version of Laudico's untitled Photo-Me ID work hangs on the back wall of Shop 6. Photo-ID machines, commonplace in Metro Manila, were automated photo booths that took small identification photographs, such as the ones used for official documents. Laudico would collect the square borders—the scraps—left in Photo-Me ID machines after the center, which included people's faces, had been punched out. Treating these leftover fragments as found units of a grid, she arranged them in organized rows on plywood. [fig. 3.13] Laudico would later expand her concept of using photo-id machine discards as part of a three-part solo exhibition in the CCP Small Gallery.⁴²⁹

According to the artist, she would frequently carry around an empty box to gather these punched-out discards anytime she saw a Photo-ID machine. Laudico further noted that to collect the discards, she had to be bold. Her curiosity to see what was left in the detritus made her overcome reservations about what bystanders might think about her acquisition methods. Laudico further argued that in order to see things, one had to first overcome one's shyness. As part of putting together her Photo-Me ID grids, she liked to imagine the faces of the people based on what was left through their portrait borders, which included hints of their apparel (police

⁴²⁹ For more information on her expanded Photo-Me ID installation, see: Exhibition Notes and Photographs for *An Exhibition of Three Works for Yolanda Laudico*, Documentation of Exhibitions, Small Gallery (Jan-May 1970), Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

badges, spaghetti straps, and so forth). She then grouped together ones that seemed “related or connected to one another,” details made visible to the viewer upon close approach.⁴³⁰

The first exhibition at Shop 6 operated similarly to Laudico’s punched-out Photo-Me ID machine discards as a void to fulfill voyeuristic desire. Located in an active shopping arcade, Shop 6 was, like a typical store trying to attract customers, outfitted with large windows meant to catch the attention of people passing through the area. In this case, potential customers instead became inadvertent voyeurs. The dilapidated and discarded objects together formed the impression of a dirty and private dwelling space visible through the large display windows of a commercial storefront. While artists assumed that Bautista’s infamous display of cellophane wrapped panties generated discomfort because of its resemblance to real storefront displays, this first exhibition made no attempt to blend the space into the fancy shops around it. Instead, it intentionally and unexpectedly confronted the high-end clientele of the area with an uncomfortably intimate space that encouraged them to consider how others might stay living in poverty (or even imprisoned in cells) in the city. Peering into a bedroom that lacked a clear inhabitant might also draw attention to the idea of missing bodies and people that had disappeared under Marcos.

Moreover, sustained voyeurism was rewarded through the observation of strange details in the exhibition. While the individual works might create an illusion of a bedroom, closer examination permits the viewers to see strange discrepancies, like a bedframe staged to appear broken, undersized hangers, and photographs that seemed to be missing the most important component—faces. Laudico suggested that overcoming shyness is what allows one to see. The first exhibition at Shop 6 estranged people from their typical surroundings, enticing them to

⁴³⁰ Yolanda Laudico Interview with Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Onsite-Access Only.

overcome propriety or timidity in order to see. Shop 6 used an out-of-place, intimate bedroom scene within a commercial center to entice people overcome quotidian expectation in order to reframe how they see and participate in their world.

Laudico and Modesto Go Bananas

Though Shop 6's first press release specified that exhibitions would run for only fourteen weeks—until mid-August 1974—Dayrit documented that shows took place in the venue until early 1975.⁴³¹ Following the first two group exhibitions, artists mounted individual shows to explore their own artistic concepts and concerns. [fig. 3.14] Chabet, for example, had an exhibition called *Bakawan Drawings* in 1974. *Bakawan Drawings* took place the same year as *Bakawan*, Chabet's exhibition of hanging mangrove branches in the closed-door CCP Small Gallery. For his solo exhibition at Shop 6, Chabet displayed his illustrations in three distinct configurations on separate walls of the shop space. On the left wall of Shop 6, Chabet arranged the drawings in a grid, while on the center and right wall, he placed them in respective vertical and horizontal configurations. The exhibition continued Chabet's exploration of the line as unique units of artistic production through analysis of their repetition in the natural world. While Dayrit's notes include documentation of many other solo exhibitions by Dalena, Dayrit, Nestor Vinluan, and so forth, this section focuses on two of the more well-documented exhibitions: Laudico's and Modesto's. Not only have both exhibitions been documented via photographs, a fact that is not the case for many of the others, but both artists incorporated parts of the banana plant, allowing for a fruitful juxtaposition of their works.

⁴³¹ Press release of the Shop 6 inaugural exhibition at Sining Kamalig, 1974, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, <http://www.aaa.org.hk/Collection/CollectionOnline/SpecialCollectionItem/8342>; Joy Dayrit, Notes on Shop 6, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, accessed August 23, 2017, <http://www.aaa.org.hk/en/collection/search/archive/the-chabet-archive-other-documents/object/notes-on-shop-6/>

Laudico and Modesto both used parts of the banana plant in their exhibitions for Shop 6 because of their availability and relatively minimal costs. While Laudico had acquired her banana leaves after spotting them on the side of the road, Modesto remarked that he decided to use bananas because they were cheap.⁴³² Yet, shortly after the Marcoses fled from the Philippines, *Philippine Panorama* published a two-part article lambasting the literal and metaphorical price of bananas for local people.⁴³³ Jamil Maidan Flores writes, “If the Philippines is a banana republic, why is it that the average Filipino can hardly afford to buy a bunch of bananas?”⁴³⁴ In the second part of his article, “Food For Thought: Banana Hunger,” Flores observed:

Writers have a term for much of the kind of hunger that we find in the Philippines today: banana hunger, the hunger of people in a banana republic where the big landowners as well as the multinational corporations such as Del Monte and Castle and Cooke (Dole) are supposedly providing the engines for development...What does this sort of exploitation got to do with hunger? Well, the land that produces food for the cocktails of some mogul in Europe or Japan could have been used to produce food that the worker could afford to buy and bring home to his family.⁴³⁵

As a once abundant and cheap fruit in the Philippines, bananas symbolized not only a main crop and source of economy for the Philippines and its people, but their current exploitation on a global market. Laudico and Modesto’s incorporation of the ubiquitous banana plant in their

⁴³² Modesto interview with author, Laudico interview with author

⁴³³ Jamil Maidan Flores, “Going Bananas,” *Philippine Panorama*, June 1, 1986, 10-13; Jamil Maidan Flores, “Food for Thought: Banana Hunger,” *Philippine Panorama*, July 27, 1986, 5-8.

⁴³⁴ Flores, “Going Bananas,” 10. In political science, a banana republic usually refers to a poorer, politically unstable country dependent on the export of a limited resource product.

⁴³⁵ Flores, “Food for Thought: Banana Hunger,” 6.

artwork directly engaged their local audience with the immediate physical and social realities in the Philippines.

[fig. 3.15–3.16] For Laudico’s solo exhibition, she continued to expand her crude oil “oil painting” concept to other forms of support. Instead of mimeographed sheets of paper, the artist dipped large banana leaves she found during a road trip to Nagcarlan into the black oil. Similar to Chabet’s *Bakawan* or *Kite Traps*, Laudico was interested in the line as a basic unit of visual pleasure. According to Laudico, “These banana leaves in the province were huge. When you look closely at the leaf form you see the linear patterns...I got very obsessed with that...I said you look around, you see lines that are fascinating.” Laudico further remarked, “I guess my obsession on banana leaves stems from my obsession with forms and lines.”⁴³⁶ [fig. 3.17–3.18] After soaking the banana leaves in crude oil, Laudico cut some of them into short lines and small squares, which she then pasted onto plywood boards to create a triptych and diptych. Laudico installed these on the side walls of Shop 6 to flank the far wall of space. There, instead of pasting neatly cut pieces of banana leaf onto plywood, Laudico draped and knotted larger pieces over nylon string strung in rows across Shop 6’s back wall. “I consider this work paintings,” Laudico expressed as she later discussed this Shop 6 exhibition.⁴³⁷

Similar to Chabet’s grids, Laudico’s paintings also visualized the struggle of maintaining a modernist grid in the Philippines. Held up with white Elmer’s glue, some of the banana leaf squares in her gridded diptych folded or flopped over as they pulled away from the plywood board. According to the artist, she purposely made paintings that would “change” and “evolve by

⁴³⁶ Yolanda Laudico Interview with Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Onsite-Access Only.

⁴³⁷ Laudico, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

itself.”⁴³⁸ She stated, for example, that because her mark-making materials were leaves, they would shrink and shrivel during the exhibition, once again emphasizing the duality of chance and choice in her compositions. While she intended her materials to alter her composition over time, Laudico still exerted extreme control over her paintings and their construction. The artist had meticulously cut by hand the banana leaves into nearly perfect identical squares and lines, which she systemically pasted in equal increments to create the final gridded configurations. Though the orderly rows of cut leaves look *almost* as if they had been mechanically constructed, some of the lines in her triptych betray that impression as they slightly curve or sag in different directions—imperfections that make visible Laudico’s careful labor in the construction of her paintings.

Laudico’s shifting banana leaf paintings exemplified how abstraction, despite its affiliation with the Marcoses, also permitted artists to combat art for instrumental ends because they refuse rigid interpretation—in this particular case, the paintings themselves even refuse fixed form. Not only could the viewer not fix a meaning to them, but the artist herself cannot even get the pieces to stay still. Made of organic materials bound to plywood with conventional craft glue, pieces of Laudico’s painting shriveled, folded, and even fell off as they morphed over the short period of the weekend. Laudico’s shifting banana leaf painting visualize art’s capacity to disentangle from instrumentality significant to not only the Marcoses, but also the goals of the social realist artists. This afforded artists an appearance of neutrality that permitted them to exhibit at the CCP.

Yet, while Laudico’s solo exhibition featured abstraction, her inclusion of banana leaves—materials found in the indigenous flora in the Philippines—distinguished her work from

⁴³⁸ Laudico, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

abstract painting that Albano accused as arbitrary and disengaged “splotches, lines, and hazes drawn on the canvas.”⁴³⁹ By 1974, artists in the Manila had consistently used everyday materials in their artworks at the CCP and in private galleries, conditioning viewers to look for an element of familiarity as an access point to contemplate the artwork. Looking upon Laudico’s imperfect grids, we struggle to ascertain what the little black squares are made of, a game that would be easier to play in person. In contrast to the abstract painting criticized by Albano, Laudico’s incorporation of banana leaves not only tied her painting to the Philippines as indigenous flora, but also because its veiled familiarity engaged the viewer in a game of discovery tied to their real-world experiences.

This game was not without clues. Laudico’s installation of knotted, oil-slicked leaves at Shop 6’s far end wall, the one immediately across from the gallery’s large display windows, most closely resembles her later installation at the CCP.⁴⁴⁰ While her pasted plywood compositions included banana leaves cut into such small segments that it masked their original materiality, these banana leaves remain in larger pieces, allowing them to break apart at their natural rupture points and hang like leaves within nature. Behind the hanging banana leaves, the wall stained with the juices of decay mixed with crude oil embodies the worst nightmares of the owners of Lahi Gallery. These draped leaves, left in their more natural form compared to their gridded counterparts, not only look as if they have escaped from the order of the grid, but serve as a key to identifying the other components in the exhibition.

⁴³⁹ Exhibition Notes for *Summer Exhibition 1972*, Documentation of Exhibitions, Main Gallery (1972), Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

⁴⁴⁰ Along with the abovementioned Photo-Me ID installation, she also draped and stapled large expanses of oiled banana leaves across seven rows of nylon string as one of her installations for *An Exhibition of Three Works* in 1975.

Despite Laudico's meticulous labor of carefully cutting oil slicked pieces of banana leaves into nearly identical pieces to paste in even increments into a gridded configuration, the choice to use organic, unpredictable materials made her paintings a touch stubborn. As she remarked, "The thing that bores me to death is anything that I can predict."⁴⁴¹ While her grids largely stayed in place, some of the squares folded over or fell off, disrupting the perfect order of the grid. Despite the planning, effort, and labor place upon organizing the pieces into a perfect, disciplined order, some of the pieces just flop. The hanging banana leaves were even more stubborn—they defiantly stained the wall, threatening to permanently leave their mark behind. By revealing that a stringent, imposed order might have a stubborn corner or line, these works offer the possibility that the same could be true under the real order and control that people lived in under Marcos. Shop 6 seemed to be one of those stubborn corners.

While Laudico tended towards subtle wit and wordplay, Modesto, as one of the primary pranksters of Shop 6, leaned on farce and slapstick humor in his artwork. Known for his erotic drawings, Modesto was illustrious as the Philippines' first practitioner of "pubism," or the practice of painting pubes.⁴⁴² His solo exhibition at Shop 6 continued his fascination of sexual forms by centering on the most phallic local fruit: bananas. **[fig. 3.19]** In a photograph documenting his exhibition, a viewer, identified by the artist as Bautista's brother, gazes upwards towards a bunch of bananas suspended in the center of the room.⁴⁴³ Behind him, broad expanses of loose paper squares cover Shop 6's front display windows and the glass panes of the open door. Suspended at the center of the light colored paper covering the windows is another bunch

⁴⁴¹ Yolanda Johnson Interview with Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Onsite-Access Only.

⁴⁴² Floy Quintos. "Erotic Art: Calling a Spade a Spade," *Parade Magazine*, June 21, 1981.

⁴⁴³ Yolanda Laudico, Fernando Modesto, Joe Bautista group discussion with author at Laudico's apartment, Manila, Philippines, 2015.

of bananas. While these large windows had initially emboldened voyeurism during the first group exhibition, the paper that now covered them seems to block visual access to outsiders. Yet, closer examination of the photograph reveals that the artist has left the top corners uncovered, leaving a small area exposed for the gaze. In fact, barely indiscernible in the far left-hand corner of the window are a pair of prying eyes—eyes which belong to the artist himself—peeking into the interior space.⁴⁴⁴

Appropriately titled *Banana Installation*, Modesto's solo exhibition opened on January 24, 1975. According to Dayrit, *Banana Installation* comprised “two kinds of Manila paper,” one that was “creamish” and the other “light pinkish” and about “3 different kinds of bananas.”⁴⁴⁵ After being bounded with red tape and string, the bananas were suspended from the ceiling with the same string.⁴⁴⁶ Modesto had pictured creating a small “banana-ville” that would contrast with the commercial center occupied by Shop 6. He wanted to show that “installation art can be fun” and a part of that pleasure was derived from the consumption of his perishable art material.⁴⁴⁷ During the opening of the exhibition, guests freely consumed the bananas and threw their discards on the floor, leaving behind “a mountain of banana peelings.”⁴⁴⁸ Modesto later commented that on that opening day, “all the guests ate the bananas.”⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁴ Laudico, Modesto, Bautista, group discussion. Modesto identifies himself as the person gazing through the window and not the person standing in front of the banana bunch.

⁴⁴⁵ Joy Dayrit, Notes on Shop 6, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, accessed August 23, 2017, <http://www.aaa.org.hk/en/collection/search/archive/the-chabet-archive-other-documents/object/notes-on-shop-6/>.

⁴⁴⁶ Dayrit, *Notes on Shop 6*.

⁴⁴⁷ Barbara Mae Dacanay. “The Strange Alchemy of Art and Sex,” *The Manila Chronicle*, June 25, 1988, 27.

⁴⁴⁸ Dacanay, “The Strange Alchemy of Art and Sex,” 27.

⁴⁴⁹ Dacanay, “The Strange Alchemy of Art and Sex,” 27.

While Modesto maintained that he never intended to produce explicit “propaganda” with his artwork, he explained *Banana Installation*’s potential political significance in an article in 1988, two years after the Marcoses had fled from the Philippines.⁴⁵⁰ Speaking about martial law under Marcos, Modesto remarked, “It was not dangled before us with a toy gun. And my answer to that was Sexual Law.”⁴⁵¹ In Modesto’s usual light-hearted manner, his reference to martial law as not being enforced with a “toy gun” referred to seriousness of the violence inherent with the declaration of martial law. Yet by responding to the violence with what Modesto refers to as “Sexual Law,” he suggested that the aggression inherent of martial law might be resisted in not only in the concept of “free love” popular in the 1970s, but also that the privacy of the bedroom permitted an enshrouded space for freedom of thought and expression.

The bananas also operate as a visual double entendre. By placing the verb “dangled” near the word “gun,” Modesto’s comment also draws attention to the fact that the hanging bananas not only resembled phallic objects, but a more ominous object. Besides the more obvious vulgar metaphor associated with the visual consumption of bananas, the act of eating the bananas—if we were to equate them to guns—also suggests the symbolic elimination or defiance of violence, one that was simultaneously made possible through Modesto’s purported “sexual law.” *Banana Installation* suggested that one method of action against the violence of authoritarianism was private conduct in more intimate spaces. These were the circumstances in which people could quietly mobilize against the Marcoses.

⁴⁵⁰ Fernando Modesto Interview with Francesca Enriquez, 1990s, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, Chabet Archive, Onsite-Access Only.

⁴⁵¹ Barbara Mae Dacanay. “The Strange Alchemy of Art and Sex,” 27.

Beyond Shop Walls: *101 Artists* and *Shop 6 Exhibition* at the CCP, 1975

Whereas Lahi Gallery had been located far north of the CCP in Quezon City, Shop 6 at Sining Kamalig was literally down a stretch of Taft Avenue from the CCP. This geographical proximity permitted artists, art enthusiasts, and the art ideas itself effortless migration and distribution between the state-sanctioned space and the alternative space.⁴⁵² One of the largest group exhibitions at Shop 6 included invitations to more conventional guest artists—and common fixtures at the CCP—to take part in an art festival entitled *101 Artists*. The festival extended into the courtyard and parking lot of Sining Kamalig and opened on August 23, 1974. Artists who participated included Eduardo Castrillo, Jose Mendoza, Rene Castrillo, Raymundo Albano, and Judy Freya Sibayan among others.⁴⁵³ Broader inclusion in *101 Artists* demonstrated Shop 6's embrace of widespread experimentation and desire for democratization.

According to a review of *101 Artists* in *Marks*, the festival had a “free-for-all atmosphere” that resulted in an “uneven quality of works” made of an “overuse of scrap materials—by-produces, recycled works, discards” that lacked “asserted presence.”⁴⁵⁴ In fact, “everybody’s concern for process and materials” meant that “the quality of appearance that is not polished or ‘elegant’.”⁴⁵⁵ For example, Eduardo Castrillo—a sculptor known for his large labor-intensive metal works and intricate jewelry—simply poured acrylic paint over trash as his contribution for the exhibition.⁴⁵⁶ Despite some of the article’s criticism towards *101 Artists* and

⁴⁵² Judy Sibayan Conversation with author March 22, 2015.

⁴⁵³ “Artists: Incidents at Shop 6,” *Marks*, May–October 1974.

⁴⁵⁴ “Artists: Incidents at Shop 6,” *Marks*.

⁴⁵⁵ “Artists: Incidents at Shop 6,” *Marks*, May–October 1974.

⁴⁵⁶ Yolanda Laudico at Talking Shop: Roberto Chabet at Lopez Museum, August 6, 2011, audio, Lopez Museum Library and Archives.

Shop 6 in general, it included brief descriptions on a handful of more “memorable works”: Joe Bautista’s tree and Judy Sibayan’s improvised *Lemon Cake*.⁴⁵⁷

An article in that same issue of *Marks* describes Bautista’s “sculpted” tree—the most “intriguing work” in *101 Artists*—as a real tree with a cement base. Bautista had cut its branches and re-attached them to the tree to with wooden braces, leaving a small gap between the tree and its branches at the initial incision points.⁴⁵⁸ Bautista intended for the trunk to “grow buds” as its dead branches “wither,” replaced with the tree’s newly sprouted branches.⁴⁵⁹ The article further notes that Bautista’s use of “a living tree” and “not a construction of carpentered wood or welded metal transforms the visual possibilities into non-abstract information. One considers the tree as *tree*—its life system, its shape, its biological function.”⁴⁶⁰

Like Laudico’s banana leaf paintings, Bautista’s sculpted tree estranged the viewer from the familiarity of the everyday world. His decision to use a living tree, a common and relatively predictable thing, provides a point of access to this estrangement as viewers, through their potential knowledge of and experience with trees, make their own conjectures about how Bautista’s Frankenstein tree might transition over time. According to *Marks*, “Bautista has made a work that...can act as a catalyst to the imagination, to endless conjectures, to absurd deductions and rationalizations, and certainly to our awareness of the world. He inflicts into a set natural presence (the living tree) a witty act of harmless annihilation and lets the awareness of...phenomenon...to make the explanations.”⁴⁶¹ Similar to much of Bautista’s work throughout

⁴⁵⁷ “101 Artists: Incidents at Shop 6,” *Marks*, May–October 1974.

⁴⁵⁸ “Joe D. Bautista’s Tree Project,” *Marks*, Vol.1, no. 2-4, May-Oct 1974.

⁴⁵⁹ “Joe D. Bautista’s Tree Project,” *Marks*.

⁴⁶⁰ “Joe D. Bautista’s Tree Project,” *Marks*.

⁴⁶¹ “Joe D. Bautista’s Tree Project,” *Marks*.

the 1970s, his sculpted tree invited public participation and encouraged critical inquiry of the world through the estrangement of familiar objects.

[fig. 3.20] Another “memorable” event took place in the parking lot—Sibayan’s impromptu performance of *Lemon Cake*. *Marks* describes the performance as “a yellow car docked at the middle of the parking lot, filled with people eating and drinking...Afterwards, they opened all doors of the car, left half a pie, two half-empty Magnolia Chocolait bottles and a metronome on top of the car’s [hood].”⁴⁶² Emblazoned on the sheet cake (not a pie) were the words “Lemon Cake,” a flavor optically enhanced by the yellowness of the car. Though *Marks* cited Sibayan as one of the “invited ‘guest’ artists,” Sibayan described herself as “gate crashing” *101 Artists*.⁴⁶³ According to Sibayan, Chabet—then her fine arts professor at UP-Diliman—casually mentioned that she should attend the *101 Artists*, Shop 6’s art festival opening later that day.⁴⁶⁴ As it happened to fall on her nineteenth birthday, Sibayan decided not only to go to *101 Artists*, but swiftly improvised a performance of her own. Sibayan documents in her autobiography:

Shop 6 as a space opened up into a courtyard in which exhibitions could spill out into the courtyard...By gate crashing an exhibition called 101 Artists, a Shop Six event, classmates Ruben Soriano, An Tison, Ces Avanceña and I drove and parked a yellow car at the parking lot of Sining Kamalig gallery to celebrate my birthday. Performing uninvited, we placed a few bottles of milk and my birthday lemon cake on the hood of the

⁴⁶² “101 Artists: Incidents at Shop 6,” *Marks*, May–October 1974.

⁴⁶³ Judy Freda Sibayan, *The Hypertext of HerMe(s)* (KT press, 2014), loc 1816-1817, Kindle.

⁴⁶⁴ Judy Sibayan, in conversation with author, March 22, 2015, Manila, Philippines.

car. When the audience approached to talk to us, we simply responded with two words, ‘lemon cake’. The performance ended.⁴⁶⁵

Lemon Cake demonstrated many of the key attributes that defined Shop 6: an accelerated pace of creation/exhibition and the purposeful estrangement of familiar, everyday objects as a way to encourage general participation and critical inquiry of the world. Sibayan’s quick conception of *Lemon Cake* as a slice of her real life—eating birthday cake and drinking milk with friends for her birthday—also mirrored the spirit behind installations and sculptures made from everyday objects that dominated Shop 6. Yet, in performing *Lemon Cake* without invitation, Sibayan importantly exemplified that Shop 6, as an alternative space that legitimated certain forms of art, was an environment for artists to not only forgo structures of power from official forms of authority, but also the ones set in place by the members of Shop 6 itself. The fact that *Marks* later recognized *Lemon Cake*—an impromptu and uninvited performance—as one of the “memorable works” of *101 Artists* suggested that not only could an artist furtively defy authority under Shop 6, but could receive commendation for her do-it-yourself spirit, one that continues to dominate the Manila art scene today.

Soon after Shop 6 finished its stint at Sining Kamalig, the artists held a major exhibition at the CCP. In November 1975, much of Shop 6 took part in the only explicit Shop 6 group exhibition in the CCP Main Gallery. The exhibition, simply titled *Shop 6*, included works by Roberto Chabet, Fernando Modesto, Joe Bautista, Yolanda Laudico, Ileana Lee, Alan Rivera, Danny Dalena, Eva Toledo, Nestor Vinluan, Julie Lluch, Berna Perez, Paeng de Jesus, and Nestore A. Reyes. [fig. 3.21] Affixed to the invitation to *Shop 6* were pieces of manila paper, steel wool, a piece of yellow string, and a small reel of negative film— minute versions of the

⁴⁶⁵ Judy Freda Sibayan, *The Hypertext of HerMe(s)* (KT press, 2014), loc 1816-1817, Kindle.

materials that showed up in the exhibition itself. Like the works in *Shop 6*, the invitations used real objects instead of mere depiction (or description) to draw their audience's attention.

Albano, referring to the annual summer exhibitions and other experimental shows—such as *An Exhibition of Objects*—at the CCP, remarked, “The exhibition of Shop 6 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines could have been a really shocking event were it not for pre-empting exposures done rather extensively during the past five years.”⁴⁶⁶ While Albano claims that prior exposure to found objects and situational art meant that the Shop 6 was not as “shocking” to people in the Philippines, it did prime a local audience to consciously engage with the kind of work Shop 6 produced. According to Albano, “Shop 6... represents the new art enlightenment... the works of Shop 6 investigate the nature of things: matters, facts, circumstances, affairs, possessions, deeds, etc....[and] the viewer consciously encounters what he sees.”⁴⁶⁷ In using mundane and easy-to-recognize objects placed in unusual situations or configurations, Shop 6 pushed viewers towards “conscious encounter” through estrangement. The viewer becomes awakened to the uncomfortable familiarity of something weird, opening the door to consider whether or not there were other strange incidents taken for granted beyond the gallery walls.

[fig. 3.22–3.23] One of the works exhibited at *Shop 6 Exhibition* was Alan Rivera's *Room/Riddles*. Inherent in Rivera's title—*Room/Riddles*—is the suggestion of a game or puzzle. Situated in one of the alcoves of the CCP Main Gallery, *Room/Riddles* consists of three low piles of bricks carefully arranged around a bunch of dirt and a jumble of plastic wrap. Despite the lack of visible construction tools, the presence of a wheelbarrow at the front of the installation indicates that the bricks are part of an emerging structure being built rather than one in the state of decomposition. Together, the materials look like the ordinary stuff of any incipient

⁴⁶⁶ Raymundo Albano, “Are we now ready for the avant-garde?” *Daily Express*, November 12, 1975, 28.

⁴⁶⁷ Albano, “Are we now ready for the avant-garde?,” 28.

construction site. Yet, left on the ground of a gallery, the raw building materials—outdoor fixtures of a country in the process of development—unexpectedly confront the viewer. These base materials might remind the viewer of a particularly controversial edifice made, in part, from similarly mundane materials—the CCP. By situating unprocessed materials in the center of a behemoth structure, *Room/Riddles* raises the question of how much stuff was required to construct such a room or building and the true benefit of that allocation of resources.

Room/Riddles not only materializes into a “conscious encounter,” but it potentially absorbs the viewer’s body into its framework. Two photographs document the exhibition: one with a wheelbarrow in the foreground and another without one. Careful examination of the dirt pile reveals what appears to be impression marks made by pushing the wheelbarrow through it. This minor detail alludes to Rivera’s installation as not only site of ongoing construction, but the presence of the human body necessary to push the wheelbarrow through the detritus. The handle of the wheelbarrow extends away from the dirt pile towards the passing viewer, inviting the presence of the viewer’s body in the completion of the project in front of them.

Not only does *Room/Riddles* invite the viewer’s bodily engagement, the wheelbarrow also points to the prior presence of the artist. To emphasize this point, the latter photograph includes the ghostly blur of the artist pushing a wheelbarrow at its edge—an effect made by the long-exposure method. Artist and viewer are both implicated Rivera’s indoor construction project. Since Rivera situated *Room/Riddles* inside the CCP Main Gallery instead of the outdoor atrium—a space that Rivera had used during a prior exhibition—the installation proposed the works exhibited at the CCP as part of an ongoing project that encouraged viewer participation and engagement. Though *Room/Riddles* might generate a critical eye against the expansive

allotment of resources used to construct the CCP, it also proposed that within such a space, new, and more collaborative, structures could arise.

While Shop 6 is frequently cited as an alternative space, the CCP also played an important role in its history. As discussed in prior chapters, the CCP offered the Filipino artist the first official, large-scale exhibition space to create artwork for a local and international audience. Though *Shop 6 Exhibition* was the only documented exhibition specifically dedicated to the group of loosely affiliated conceptual artists in the 1970s, many of their artists had their start as part of the annual cohort of thirteen artists or the yearly summer exhibitions. In fact, because the CCP was a state-sponsored exhibition space, it did not need to exhibit profitable artworks—unlike more commercially oriented galleries. Bautista noted that after he began exhibiting at the CCP in the early 1970s, he did not try to show his “pakulo” elsewhere because it did not think the work to be profitable. Bautista credited Chabet’s relationship with the gallery owners as to how Shop 6 was realized as a space they could have—for free—to create the kind of non-profitable artwork that had turned off the proprietors of Lahi Gallery. After *Shop 6 Exhibition*, the *CCP Annual*, which began in the 1977, continued to show works by this roster of artists.⁴⁶⁸

The Marcoses’ concern with international legitimacy encouraged exhibition of “avant-garde” work because it demonstrated creative tolerance and positioned the Philippines as contemporaneous to the broader art world. Artists would continue to include trash and natural

⁴⁶⁸ Roces has commented on the CCP Annual was a “yearly representative sampling of our various artistic commitments.” (17) Marian Pastor Roces, “The CCP Annual,” *Philippine Art Supplement*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Jan–Feb 1981, 17.

debris found in the squalor of their everyday surroundings to create ordered and aesthetically appealing art. On a rudimentary level, artists managed to undermine Imelda Marcos' agenda of *kagandahan* (beauty) by composing art displayed in her pristine, white-walled CCP out of literal garbage. Imelda Marcos had declared the CCP the "treasure-house of the Filipino spirit" that would permit "our works in stone and story, in dance and drama, in music and color [to] remain, for all time, a testament to the goodness, the truth, and the beauty of a historic race."⁴⁶⁹ The phrase "Truth, beauty and goodness" became the motto for the CCP, and its logo, designed by Carlos Francisco, demonstrated that sentiment.⁴⁷⁰ The Marcoses, particularly Imelda, imagined the CCP as a cultural actor that could promote the national character of art in the Philippines. Though it had a nationalist agenda—one that also insisted on a certain performance of internationalism—artists used the space in variable ways that demonstrated ambivalence to the CCP's intended purpose.

That members Shop 6 used non-seriousness or playfulness as a central way of explaining their work permitted their acceptance into the CCP, the very institutional behemoth to which they claimed to be alternative. As Albano noted, Shop 6 was not a powerless group of artists with peripheral interests, but rather these artists dominated programming at the CCP during the 1970s. By exhibiting both in alternative spaces and giant cultural institutions, these artists were able to find a multiplicity of space for their work and their work was decidedly considered

⁴⁶⁹ Imelda Marcos, "A Treasure House of the Filipino Spirit," *Manila Chronicle*, September 12, 1969, 16, in Article #23 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc.

⁴⁷⁰ Christi-Anne Castro, *Musical Renderings of a Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 117. Ethnomusicologist Christi-Anne Castro observes that the CCP's logo, comprising three Malay-script Ks meant to stand for *katotohanan* (truth), *kagandahan* (beauty) and *kabutihan* (goodness), recalls the similar insignia of *Samahang Kataastaasan, Kagalangalang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan* (Supreme and Most Honorable Society of the Children of the Nation), who abbreviated their name to *Katipunan* or the acronym *KKK*.⁴⁷⁰ Castro argues, "More than their limited historical role, the *Katipunan* are representative of revolutionary Filipino nationalism as an ideology, sentiment, and character-defining trait of the nation... The nationalist intent of the CCP, then, has clear ties to the longer nationalist tradition of the Philippines, giving it symbolic validation as a cultural actor and not just a venue for performance."

apolitical. Yet, interestingly enough, they were placing literal trash into the gallery space. Quiet jabs with the moldy photographs and smelly bananas became a way that artists compromised the integrity of the institution—art could be free from commercial and nationalistic gains, and it could be found within the rubble of the Philippine landscape.

In Enriquez’s interview with Modesto, she acknowledged that the artists “associated with Shop 6” also showed their works at the CCP, asking him if people found the works “offensive.”⁴⁷¹ Modesto responded, “In some ways, yes...There was a show—I don’t remember the title—with shit (*na may tae*). It had a smell...Imelda did not want it (*ayaw ni Imelda*)....So Imelda was going around during the installation and she smelled it. It was real shit [*tae*] and it was in a box.”⁴⁷² Modesto, who was known as one of the jokers among Shop 6, stated, “It was probably in 1971.”⁴⁷³ None of the documentation from the CCP Library and Archives or the Chabet archive corroborate Modesto’s claim. Even if Modesto’s anecdote was fiction—a fantasy of beauty queen Imelda sniffing for poop in her new Cultural Center—it reflected certain sentiments regarding how the artists viewed the institution. Imelda built them a powerful piece of concrete architecture designed by Philippine architect darling du jour, Leandro Locsin, to develop the arts of the Philippine people, and the artists filled it with shit.

⁴⁷¹ Modesto, interview with Francesca Enriquez. Modesto stated that the artist was not necessarily a member of Shop 6, simply a student of Chabet’s.

⁴⁷² Modesto, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

⁴⁷³ Modesto, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

CHAPTER IV

Junyee's Woods: Conceptualism in Contemporary Indigenous Art

During an interview about Shop 6 and their 1974 exhibition at Lahi Gallery, Chabet jokingly boasted of Shop 6's foresight, remarking, "I think we showed the first manifestation of indigenous art. Joe's panties, this is what you see in Quaipo [Market]." ⁴⁷⁴ In that same interview, he also quipped that Laudico's installation of fishing net with oil slicked sticks occurred "before people were starting to use sticks and stones. You know, that kind of installation—indigenous." ⁴⁷⁵ Yet, by jesting that Joe Bautista's installation of saran-wrapped panties and Laudico's oily sticks could be considered "indigenous," Chabet highlighted what he considered to be the widespread and dubious tendency of labeling artworks made from alternative materials in the Philippines as "indigenous" following the 1970s.

In the same year as Shop 6's first experimental exhibitions, newcomer Luis "Junyee" Yee Jr., an artist who art historian Alice Guillermo later designated as "one of the earliest proponents of the use of indigenous materials in the Philippines," ⁴⁷⁶ received attention as the Grand Award

⁴⁷⁴ Roberto Chabet interview with Francesca Enriquez in 1990s, accessed via Shop 6 Folder, AsiaArtArchive, Hong Kong.

⁴⁷⁵ Roberto Chabet interview with Francesca Enriquez.

⁴⁷⁶ Alice Guillermo, "Celebrating Nature, Intimating Spirit: Junyee," *World Sculpture News*, Winter 2001, 23. In Alice Guillermo's *World Sculpture News* profile of Junyee, she notes how Junyee "stresses that the 'indigenous' which he upholds in his art is conceptually different than from the 'ethnic' which may be easily, although not necessarily, construed as limited and self-contained pockets of culture." ⁴⁷⁶ According to Guillermo, though Junyee believes that "the indigenous is constituted by contributions from the different ethnic groups which...enter into a fluid condition of communication and exchange," he ultimately affirms that "the environment shapes culture, and

recipient at the 1974 Annual Art Exhibition held at the recently inaugurated Ayala Museum.⁴⁷⁷

The *Times Journal* announced his victory as “the most exciting thing about the annual AAP (Art Association of the Philippines) contest” and described Junyee as “a complete unknown” and “the year’s art find.”⁴⁷⁸ [fig. 4.1] As the Grand Award winner, Junyee’s piece, *Our Woods*, defeated the work of more established artists such as Napoleon Abueva, his mentor at UP-Diliman, whose sculpture received an honorable mention that year.⁴⁷⁹

Two years later, in 1976, Junyee held an outdoor sculpture exhibition in Rizal Park.⁴⁸⁰ Titled *Malabayabas, and other types of wood in the sculpture of Junyee (Malabayabas at iba pang kahoy sa Iskultura ni Junyee)*, it was “the first outdoor wood sculpture show in the country.”⁴⁸¹ In 1980, Junyee received the coveted *Thirteen Artists* recognition from the CCP, which he used to mount the first site-specific group installation exhibition at Los Baños, Laguna. He also had his first solo exhibition at the CCP in 1980 that included an installation titled *Wood Things*. Junyee later received a second Grand Award at the Association of Art the Philippines Annual Art Competition in 1986 with a sculpture made entirely of twigs, rattan, fiber, vines,

this is best shown in art through installation and making use of indigenous materials from the natural surroundings and found objects.”

⁴⁷⁷ The exhibition opened to the public in July 5, 1974 and the award ceremony took place on July 15, 2015 at Ayala Museum. The Ayala Museum had just opened to the public that year on June 22 and was popular for its dioramas—“scenic representation in miniature of historical events in the Philippines.” From “Thousands Have So Far Visited Ayala Museum on Makati Ave,” *Bulletin Today*, July 11, 1974, 25, in #Article 31 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc. For more information about Ayala Museum that year, see Juanita Galang-Trinidad, “More Than A Museum,” *Expressweek*, August 22, 1974, 5–16, in #Article 31 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc.

⁴⁷⁸ “This Year’s Art Find,” *Times Journal*, June 29, 1974, p.13.

⁴⁷⁹ Amadis Ma. Guerrero, “The AAP Chalks Up Another Milestone,” *Expressweek*, August 15, 1974, 43, in #Article 31 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc. See more on Abueva’s mentorship of Junyee in Jose “Bogie” Tence Ruiz, *Wood Things Installation Junyee*, (Manila: Yonzon Associates, Inc., 2016), 34–35.

⁴⁸⁰ “Sculpture Show Going on at Park,” *Bulletin Today*, March 2, 1976, in #Article 33 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc.

⁴⁸¹ “Sculpture Show Going on at Park.”

leaves and bamboo, described in the CCP's curatorial files as "non-traditional and indigenous 'cheap' materials...used in contemporary art making."⁴⁸² He formalized his position as an indigenous artist internationally when he co-authored a manifesto for indigenous art with Virgilio "Pandy" Aviado at the 4th Havana Biennial in 1991.

Though Chabet's mocking remarks that Shop 6's incorporation of "indigenous" materials, such as Laudico's banana leaf installations, predated the popularity of contemporary indigenous art seen throughout the Philippines during the 1980s and 90s, Junyee had also gained attention during the 1970s using similarly local materials. I use the term contemporary indigenous art or indigenous installation art in this chapter as it relates to Junyee's practice to reference art that incorporates "alternative" materials of local persuasion.⁴⁸³ These materials are often, but not always, made from plant-life indigenous to the Philippines. This differs from indigenous art that would refer to indigenous identification of the artists or people who created it.

⁴⁸² Description of work found at Cultural Center of the Philippines, Fine Art and Museum Division, Curatorial File, Luis "Junyee" Yee.

⁴⁸³ The idea that the term "indigenous" in contemporary indigenous art refers to materials rather than people is widespread in the Philippines by the 1990s after Junyee and Aviado co-wrote the *Manifesto for Indigenous Art* at the Havana Biennial in 1991 and held the ASEAN Conference for Indigenous Materials, an international conference held in the Philippines in 1993. Art critic Jennie Javelosa, for example, begins an article on Junyee's participation in the Havana Biennial by reviewing that "in the early '80s, the beginnings of a unique trend in the visual arts began to make themselves felt. With leaves, twigs and found objects, artists expressed themselves by using indigenous materials. This became one preoccupation of mainstream art. Such a move proved economical because materials did not have to be imported." (Jeannie E. Javelosa, "Junyee makes waves in Havana," *Manila Chronicle*, January 11-17, 1992, in Article #60 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc.) This chapter will further discuss one of the major exhibitions, *Ugat Suri*, that codified indigenous art based on its materials. Another art critic, Paul B. Zafaralla, also notes that "indigenous art" is first and foremost medium oriented, with "bamboo, pods, twigs, vines, wood stumps and other found objects that are both brittle and ephemeral." He also argues that "there is a hazy distinction between indigenous and ethnic art" and poses the problem of "indigenous art relying heavily...on western principles of art and design." (Paul Zafaralla, "Indigenous Art," *Manila Times*, May 6, 1992, in Article #60 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc.) Finally, Rachel Mayo writes in "Indigenous Art: A Bonding with Nature?" that indigenous art often involved "being true to the nature of one's surroundings, one's culture, one's history, one's environment." Of the works she sees at *Folk Art (Katutbong Sining)* the *Alliance Francaise* in Manila, she observes that what they have in common are "materials. The use of alternative, natural materials into making art: bamboo, leaves, twigs, pebbles—back to the earth." (Rachel Mayo, "Indigenous Art: Bonding with Nature?," in AAP LIHAM, reprinted from *Malaya*, June 11, 1992, in Article #62 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc.) These are just a handful of articles among many in the Philippines that define contemporary indigenous art based on natural materials or found objects.

Junyee himself stated, “Now, indigenous material is a misnomer, because when they say indigenous material, they are thinking it’s like a material only found in the country. It’s not true, because copper, gold, marble, metal [i.e. more conventional materials for art-making] it’s all here.”⁴⁸⁴ He further described how, at the ASEAN Conference for Indigenous Materials, which Junyee led with Virgilio Aviado in 1993, he “tried to explain to them that the word indigenous material is a misnomer, that it should be called nontraditional material for contemporary art-making.”

Junyee’s allusion to “nontraditional material for contemporary art-making” and his tendency towards ephemeral installations mirrored the concerns of conceptual artists in the 1970s.⁴⁸⁵ While Junyee is associated with indigenous installation in the Philippines by the 1990s, he, like Chabet and other Shop 6 artists, first experimented with local and found materials without necessarily proclaiming them as indigenous references. Instead, I argue that Junyee’s installations and these early realizations of “indigenous” art fall under an umbrella of Philippine conceptualism as they shared similar material concerns and struggles of art making in the Philippines.⁴⁸⁶ By including Junyee in my dissertation on Philippine conceptualism, I position that Junyee’s early works were an extension of conceptual impulses.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁴ Junyee, interview with author in his home at Los Baños, Philippines, October 22, 2017. All unattributed direct quotations from Junyee in the chapter are from this interview unless otherwise stated.

⁴⁸⁵ Junyee, interview with author. In Junyee’s remarks at his book signing for *Wood Things Installation Junyee*, a monograph written by his long-time friend and fellow artist Jose “Bogie” Tence Ruiz, he joked about how in the 1970s, everyone, including himself, wanted to make ephemeral artworks. Now, in their old age, everyone is trying to find photographs to prove that these artworks existed.

⁴⁸⁶ As Chabet had highlighted in his abovementioned quotation, artists during the period made use of the various local materials available to them, in part because paint was expensive, but also as a way to avoid criticism that their work was derivative or driven purely by economic gain. Laudico, for example, had played with the concept of oil paint required by her teacher by using crude oil for her project. While she had joked that she had done so because of the prohibitive costs of paint, the word play of crude oil and oil paint pointed towards arbitrariness of value and the fungibility of language so characteristic of conceptual art. Fellow *Shop 6* artist Modesto similarly chose to use cheap, everyday materials in his installations, noting “If it was oil and canvas, you have to paint...that’s expensive, you need to buy it, then you’d do it seriously, right?” Employment of local or cheap materials allowed artists a level

The CCP was built upon Imelda's desire to elevate the Philippines within an international circulation of modern performance and art. Much of the first three chapters focus on how artists compromised Imelda's vision of artistic progress through exhibitions that occupied the spaces in ways that cast doubt on the instrumentalization of their art. On the one hand, the CCP's developmental agenda—established under the Marcoses' desire for rapid progress—promoted an experimental art practice that would demonstrate international contemporaneity and equivalence. On the other hand, Imelda, along with others involved in the Philippine art world, also found the development of a local culture and aesthetic important to national interests and pride.⁴⁸⁸ The Marcoses supported the implementation of local materials in Philippine music, architecture, and design to connote physical autonomy from the West—a form of cultural nationalism that bordered on self-exotification for foreign approval and export.

In the decades contingent on indigenous materials as a form of cultural power, Junyee's capricious installations question the stability of these materials as markers of particular place. Part of the chapter traces how contemporary indigenous art in the Philippines was codified through its inclusion of alternative materials. Like the self-proclaimed conceptual artists, Junyee also concerned himself with questions of orientation as a Filipino artist in an increasingly globalized art world through the employment of materials alternative to paint. Through close analysis of a handful of Junyee's installations from the 1970s and 80s, I examine how he manipulated local materials and references as a form of self-determination in the face of

of freedom to experiment outside of expectations with little financial risk. (Fernando Modesto interview with Francesca Enriquez in 1990s, Shop 6 File, AsiaArtArchive Hong Kong.)

⁴⁸⁷ Leonidas V. Benesa specifically contrasts Junyee with "the dustbin of conceptual artists," in "Paper as Art Medium in Touring ASEAN Exhibition," *Daily Express*, March 8, 1984, in Article #45 from Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc.

⁴⁸⁸ See Purita Kalaw-Ledesma and Amadis Ma. Guerrero, *The Struggle for Philippine Art* (Manila: Vera-Reyes, 1974).

dictatorial control. As the terms of indigenism evolved for Junyee through the twentieth century, his work encourages us to consider the fluidity of artistic and political categories as it relates to position and place.

Trellis (Balag) Collaborative Installation as Indigenous?

During the early 1990s, Junyee described his experiences as a young artist in the Fine Arts department of U.P.-Diliman in the 1960s. He reminisced:

Like other artists of my generation, I grew up at the time when Filipinos, just emerging from the trauma of the Second World War and newly given their ‘independence’ by America, was at the height of admiration for all things American...But for the student activism that opened the floodgates of nationalistic fervor, my generation would have marched blindly along the road of western culture. It was in this atmosphere that I put up my first outdoor installation using indigenous materials and according to traditional Filipino form and custom.⁴⁸⁹

As a student, Junyee had been an “avowed activist” and a member of the politically active Brotherhood of the Plebeians, a progressive, left-wing organization that was temporarily dismantled during martial law.⁴⁹⁰ Though Junyee had initially been more of a social realist artist, he claimed he shifted towards installation art in order to more effectively incorporate indigenous materials and elements in his work.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁹ Junyee, “The Artist and His Environment.”

⁴⁹⁰ Alice Guillermo, “Celebrating Nature, Intimating Spirit,” 23.

⁴⁹¹ Alice Guillermo, “Celebrating Nature, Intimating Spirit,” 24.

His first one man outdoor installation occurred on a vacant plot on U.P.'s wooded campus in 1970, the same year as First Quarter Storm.⁴⁹² Titled *Balag* (Trellis), a structure that Guillermo described as one typically used "to support fruit-bearing vines such as gourds," the temporary installation included a number of inch-wide bamboo strips bounded by ropes and strings in a grid formation.⁴⁹³ *Balag* was inexpensive to make as it benefitted from voluntary labor and its primary material, bamboo, "could be had from the fringes of U.P."⁴⁹⁴ The gridded bamboo formed the top of the installation, which was held up by four posts—one at each corner to create a shelter-like structure. Jose "Bogie" Tence Ruiz, an artist who recently published a monograph on Junyee, surmises that "the grids [were] possibly 1 to 1.5 feet square, mimicking the actual trellis one finds in one's backyard garden."⁴⁹⁵ Like Maceda with *Cassettes 100*, Junyee relied on volunteers from U.P. to help construct *Balag*.

He requested that onlookers hang miscellaneous things as donations on *Balag*'s completed structure. In response, people left a variety of objects, including poems, political slogans, and various food items such as eggplants and dried fish.⁴⁹⁶ Ruiz also deduces that *Balag* "must have been taller than six feet but not quite eight feet" in order to "allow the average Filipino student to pass underneath, reach the top grid, to tie...objects, pieces of paper or board on which there were protests, poetry, love notes to their partners, quotations, fruits, candies."⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹² Ruiz writes, "Junyee places his execution of Balag in 1970...it may have been during a lull after the First Quarter Storm, which took place in January of that year. From his accounts, the work stayed a few weeks on site...so it may have been done during the early summer of 1970, with the dry weather allowing some of its processes to take place and linger." From Jose "Bogie" Tence Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 146.

⁴⁹³ Alice Guillermo, "Celebrating Nature, Intimating Spirit," 24.

⁴⁹⁴ Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 146.

⁴⁹⁵ Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 146.

⁴⁹⁶ Guillermo, "Celebrating Nature, Intimating Spirit," 24.

⁴⁹⁷ Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 146.

Junyee remarked, “It’s a very strange looking thing, I was very satisfied because the students participated.” At the end of the installation, which took place over a few weeks, a lively group assembled to sing and read aloud the poems left on *Balag* while the edibles were “harvested,” cooked, and shared among the people gathered.⁴⁹⁸

Junyee declared *Balag* as “the first artwork that was not priced to be sold” as well as “the first artwork that has participation [from] the audience,” echoing similar concerns to those expressed by the conceptual artists. He also emphasized that it was “the first artwork that used indigenous or cultural tradition.” Like Chabet and other Shop 6 artists working under similar context, Junyee found himself experimenting with alternative materials such as bamboo—an “indigenous” material—during an era that privileged these materials as methods of expressing “nationalistic fervor.”⁴⁹⁹ As discussed earlier, Chabet, for example, also featured bamboo at Shop 6’s first installation in 1974 at Lahi Gallery exhibition. He had tied a single bamboo pole with thick rope and hung it from the ceiling, just below Laudico’s installation of oil slicked sticks. He called the hanging bamboo pole “God.” While Chabet later acknowledged that his installation might be considered “indigenous,” he emphasized that “when we [Shop 6] were doing this, we were not trying to be indigenous. It was just that, there’s this material we saw and it was nice to use. It was this pole and it was hanging.”⁵⁰⁰

Not only did artists involved with Shop 6 frequently use indigenous materials such as bamboo and banana leaves in their conceptual art practices, sculptors in the late 1960s and 70s also looked towards local resources to make their work. Francisco Verano, for example, was

⁴⁹⁸ Junyee, interview with author.

⁴⁹⁹ Junyee, “The Artist and His Environment.”

⁵⁰⁰ Chabet, interview with Francesca Enriquez.

lauded by art historian Rodolfo Paras-Perez as an artist whose “bamboo sculptures definitely indicate more than the material presence of bamboo” after he took part in *Ugat-Suri*, an exhibition that codified indigenous art practices as a nationalistic one in the Philippines in 1984.⁵⁰¹ [fig. 4.2] As part of the exhibition, a multi-gallery effort that also included Junyee, Verano exhibited a sculpture entitled *Bamboo Fugue I*. The sculpture comprises numerous bamboo poles of variable lengths attached together in an upright configuration. Two lengths of bamboo carefully rest on *Bamboo Fugue*’s pedestal and support the rest of the hollowed-out pieces. The overall sculpture resembles some kind of abstracted musical instrument or the pipes of an organ. As implied by the title of the work—*Bamboo Fugue I*—not only does Verano’s sculpture resemble a musical instrument, it also produces sound like one. The individual poles have disparate sized holes cut into them that generate a whistle-like noise with the flow of wind through the bamboo shafts.⁵⁰²

Verano had first started working with bamboo in the 1970s when he installed a large-scale bamboo sculpture at the CCP in a 1971 exhibition. Similar to Junyee’s *Balag*, Verano arranged bamboo poles in a three-dimensional, trellis-like formation. While *Balag* was mounted outside, Verano’s sculpture, however, was exhibited within the confines an indoor, state-sanctioned art space. [fig. 4.3] Simply called *Bamboo*, the sculpture consists of a matrix of interlocked bamboo poles—a material considered so fragile, even esteemed sculptor Abueva had found it too difficult to master.⁵⁰³ *Bamboo* occupies a large part of the room and resembles an off-kilter, three-dimensional grid. While the space between the bamboo poles allows the viewer

⁵⁰¹ Rod Paras-Perez, “Art Galleries Band Together,” *Times Journal*, March 6, 1984. *Ugat-Suri* will be discussed at greater length later in the chapter.

⁵⁰² Alice Guillermo, “Francisco Verano,” *Ugat-Suri* (Manila: ASEAN Institute of Art, 1984), 10.

⁵⁰³ “The Art of Abueva, sculptor,” *Bulletin Today*, September 17, 1973, 26.

to see through and visually enter the sculpture, the arrangement of the bamboo itself reminds one of a prison cell. The brittleness of the bamboo and the precariousness of their placement suggests the potential for movement, as if the bamboo were hanging on distinct planes that could shift around like an oversized mobile. Kalaw-Ledesma described Verano's sculpture as "one of the more successful local experiments in this medium."⁵⁰⁴ Kalaw-Ledesma also noted that *Bamboo* exemplified the "conceptual, environmental and kinetic" art promoted by the CCP as a work of "avant-garde sculpture" during that period.⁵⁰⁵

The practice of using local materials was not limited to visual art practices during the 1970s. The use of local materials also became important in Philippine music, design, and architecture among other creative pursuits during the 1970s. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, Maceda, who had conducted fieldwork for his ethnomusicology degree in various provinces in the Philippines, often incorporated instrumentation made out from local materials into his compositions. [fig. 4.4–4.6] His scores for *Kubing* (1966), *Pagsamba* (1968), and *Siasid* (1983) include illustrations of instruments made from indigenous materials such as bamboo scrapers and flutes, and gongs designed after the ones he had experienced Maguindanao. Not only did he use local materials to make a range of instruments, but in compositions such as *Cassettes 100*—discussed in the first chapter of the dissertation—everyday objects such as shells or rice were also used to produce sounds like rain, a fragment of environmental noise.

Maceda was not the only one invested in promoting local materials for music. In 1976, the Bamboo Organ Festival began in Las Piñas, a small fishing city located a few miles from Manila, with support from the CCP. Verano had credited the Las Piñas Bamboo Organ for

⁵⁰⁴ Kalaw-Ledesma and Guerrero, *The Struggle for Philippine Art*, 125.

⁵⁰⁵ Kalaw-Ledesma and Guerrero, *The Struggle for Philippine Art*, 125.

inspiring some of his work in *Ugat-Suri*, as he wanted to make sculpture that “can be made to look massive yet visually light in appearance.”⁵⁰⁶ The bamboo organ, housed in a small parish church, was built nearly two centuries ago by a Spanish missionary and had been restored in Bonn.⁵⁰⁷ According to an article published in 1977, the bamboo organ was “the only one of its kind in the world.”⁵⁰⁸ Though “tiny” and “limited in volume,” the organ “has an incredibly wide range of sounds.”⁵⁰⁹ In the late 1970s foreign organists from England, Belgium, Germany, and Argentina joined the festival with the help from their embassies and the Cultural Center.⁵¹⁰ The Festival remains an active musical event in Las Piñas to this day.

The use of local materials also came to prominence in Philippine design. [fig. 4.7–4.8] In 1973, Imelda Marcos expressed her approval of the Philippine Institute of Interior Designers’ (PIID) “relevant response and use of tropical plants, palms, and the surfacing of natural grains of wood in the furniture” at their annual exhibition at the CCP Main Gallery.⁵¹¹ She noted that the exhibition, entitled *New Directions*, exemplified an “innovative and imaginative use of local material and design resources” and demonstrated “the richness of our design materials and the creativity of our people.”⁵¹² According to the exhibition files the “new directions” implied by the title of the exhibition was not “the concepts of designs, but the growing awareness for the

⁵⁰⁶ Alice Guillermo, “Francisco Verano,” *Ugat-Suri*, 10.

⁵⁰⁷ Rosalinda L. Orosa, “The Bamboo Organ Festival: A Unique Tradition Begins,” *Philippines Daily Express*, February 27, 1977, p. 26.

⁵⁰⁸ Orosa, “The Bamboo Organ Festival: A Unique Tradition Begins,” 26.

⁵⁰⁹ Orosa, “The Bamboo Organ Festival: A Unique Tradition Begins,” 26.

⁵¹⁰ “Foreigners Participate in Bamboo Organ Fest,” *Philippine Daily Express*, January 15, 1978, p. 24.

⁵¹¹ “First Lady is Impressed by the PIID (Philippine Institute of Interior Designers) Exhibit at CCP,” *Bulletin Today*, October 5, 1973, 25.

⁵¹² “First Lady is Impressed by the PIID,” 25.

excellence of Philippine materials,” with the extra emphasis on the use of materials over aesthetics.⁵¹³ Not only was Imelda Marcos pleased with the new directions taken by the PIID with their choice and utilization of local materials, but she also exuded pride in more standard, functional fare such as “unglazed pottery, chrome plastics...and baskets” that were “also being made much use of abroad.”⁵¹⁴

[fig. 4.9–4.10] Imelda brought her attraction to local materials in design to new heights when she commissioned the Coconut Palace (*Tahanang Filipino*) in 1978 as a government guesthouse. She commissioned it with the support of the Philippine Coconut Authority and the United Coconut Planter’s Bank. While she encouraged the innovation of objects made from indigenous materials for foreign export, the Coconut Palace was an example of local materials leveraged for foreign consumption in the Philippines. During the period, the coconut industry was the Philippines’ third major dollar-earning export and contributed \$536 million to the local economy.⁵¹⁵ Architect Francisco Mañosa designed the building using coconut and the by-products of coconut. Located within the CCP Complex, the ostentatious structure was made of 70 percent coconut, with the rest coming from other “indigenous materials” such as local hardwood from Philippine trees such as narra, apitong, and kamagong.⁵¹⁶

As a government guesthouse, the Coconut Palace was intended to house foreign dignitaries and guests such as Brooke Shields, Sean Connery, Van Cliburn, and Christina

⁵¹³ Exhibition Notes For *New Directions*, Documentation of Exhibitions, Main Gallery (1973), Cultural Center of the Philippines Library and Archives.

⁵¹⁴ “First Lady is Impressed by the PIID (Philippine Institute of Interior Designers) Exhibit at CCP,” *Bulletin Today*, 25, October 5, 1973.

⁵¹⁵ Gerard Lico, *Edifice Complex: Power, Myth, and Marcos State Architecture* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 2003), 118.

⁵¹⁶ Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 118. According to Lico, scientists from the Philippine Coconut Authority and the United Nations Coconut Wood Utilization Project bred a coconut lumber that they called *Imelda madera*, after the First Lady.

Ford.⁵¹⁷ In fact, Brooke Shields, who was visiting for the Manila Film festival, cut the ribbon for the inauguration of the Coconut Palace in 1981, shortly after the Marcoses lifted martial law for the official visit of Pope John Paul II. The Pope had initially refused to visit the Philippines while the country remained under martial law. Yet while Pope John Paul II eventually acquiesced to a papal visit, he refused to stay at the Coconut Palace because of its opulence compared to the general poverty experienced in the country.⁵¹⁸

In a speech at the Coconut Palace's opening, Imelda declared the building "a repository of native materials to show the Filipinos and the world that the Philippines is truly a rich country."⁵¹⁹ She further lauded, "Before, people used to idolize everything western or foreign. Now, he...finds beauty in his own land."⁵²⁰ Imelda had intended the Coconut Palace to be the physical and material exemplar of Philippine independence and prosperity to foreign guests. Like Imelda, well-known for adorning herself in "terno" style Filipina dress with full butterfly sleeves, the Coconut Palace exemplified Imelda's shrewd understanding of how to appeal to Euro-American guests' orientalist desire for difference and exoticism.

Junyee came to prominence in the 1970s when exploration of indigenous materials and motifs in art, music, architecture, and design became important to nationalistic interests that coincided with the consolidation of Marcoses' power. The promotion of local materials for foreign export and the construction of the Coconut Palace with local resources marked the

⁵¹⁷ Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 117.

⁵¹⁸ Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 117. On page 117, Lico noted that it was "so that Imelda could use it to entertain personal friends such as Brooke Shields, Sean Connery, Van Cliburn and Christina Ford." Despite rumors that the building was designed for the Pope's visit, Mañosa explains that this is not true on page 117. He states, "This was not true. Mrs. Marcos approached me well before we were even aware that the pope would be coming."

⁵¹⁹ Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 117.

⁵²⁰ Lico, *Edifice Complex*, 117.

Philippines' economic potential as a country with raw potential and rich resources worth an investor's time. Furthermore, the development of an ostentatious structure that resembled a tropical bungalow more than a government guesthouse was intended to be, much like Imelda herself, a spectacle of beauty and exoticism of a unified Philippines that charmed foreign celebrities and dignitaries alike.

As demonstrated by previous chapters, while inclusion of local materials furthered Imelda's agenda of a rapidly developing art practice in the Philippines, many artists exploited the freedom given to them to fulfill her developmental program in ways that questioned or compromised the Marcoses' authority. While Junyee similarly experimented with locally acquired, organic materials, he was more conscientious of their symbolic reference to cultural autonomy than the conceptual artists, who seemed more interested in how organic materials reacted to various forms of stress and duration. Junyee considered *Balag* as his "first attempt to use purely Filipino ingredients as material for visual culture."⁵²¹ He remarked that when he constructed *Balag*, it was "a very political time.... The burning question during our time in Diliman was 'What is Philippine art?'.... So I was trying to look for a way to express my Filipino self." Junyee imagined "a time machine... [to] go back to the past, without intervention of the whites, the Spaniards" to conceive of how art would look. As his first attempt at a response, he came up with *Balag*.

Junyee suggested that *Balag*'s indigenous flavor arose not only from his employment of local materials—"things natural to the Philippines like bamboo"—but also from the assistance of a community that made his installation a success by contributing to the trellis structure that was

⁵²¹ Junyee, "The Artist and His Environment."

also built through collaboration.⁵²² Instead of rummaging in garbage bins or gathering banana leaves at the side of the road— actions taken by Modesto and Laudico, respectively— Junyee relied on collaboration as a method of gathering materials since people hung items on the trellis as part of the installation. According to him, it was not only the physical materials that comprised *Balag* which made the work indigenous, but also the act of coming together to form a community that contributed to the sharing of song and food. Junyee explained “*Bayanihan*, a Filipino tradition of helping one’s neighbor, was the indigenous element of the work.”⁵²³ Junyee’s reference to *bayanihan*, which comes from the word *bayan*, meaning town or people, suggested that the indigenous elements in *Balag* came from the coming together of people as good neighbors and citizens to create a community rather than the accumulation of local materials. Junyee stated, “It was academic kind of. But I still persisted maybe because I was...romantic, I was young, I was foolish.”

Balag was taken down after “two, three weeks” as allotted by the university permit.⁵²⁴ After all the food was cooked and eaten, a small crowd of twenty to thirty students continued to gather and sing around the trellis. *Balag*’s outdoor structure and singing on a public university campus permitted those unfamiliar with the visual art world to access it. Junyee expressed that during that period “Filipino rock and roll started to grow” and that while “nobody understood it [visual art]” people understood music because “everyone is doing rock and roll.”⁵²⁵ The familiarity of assembling and sharing in song and food allowed access to those typically excluded from the art world. Imelda lauded the use of local or indigenous materials in music,

⁵²² Junyee, interview with author.

⁵²³ Junyee, interview with author.

⁵²⁴ Junyee, interview with author.

⁵²⁵ Junyee, interview with author.

design and architecture as a form of cultural export of Philippine independence to an international audience—both to those who visited Manila and to those abroad. Free from the probing eyes of an international audience, *Balag* made a bid for people to assemble and actively participate in their own culture-making process as one that came from the people rather than a spectacle catered to foreign desire.⁵²⁶

Malabayabas, and Other Types of Wood in Junyee's Sculptures

Similar to Imelda's own cultural agenda, Junyee saw using indigenous materials as a concrete means to construct an artistic identity distinct from Western cultural interference. Whereas the First Lady was interested in exploiting these materials to create a stable identity for export, Junyee focused on the land as a source of materials that permitted freedom from the constraints of governance and internationalism. Junyee's second outdoor installation, which took place in Rizal Park, would not occur for another six years. In fact, shortly after *Balag*, Junyee set fire to his possessions and moved to Los Baños, where he settled at the foot of Mt. Makiling for three years. During this period, he started to secure all of his art materials by using "only discards from nature," a practice he continued once he returned from his sabbatical in the woods.⁵²⁷ Junyee later explained that in order to make his small works, he followed "the lead from insects and birds" and "started making simple objects."⁵²⁸ While he initially created all of his artwork during this period with his bare hands, he eventually made crude tools that allowed his installations to become more elaborate. As his installations became bigger and more

⁵²⁶ Serves as interesting pre-history to Shop 6 and the function of exhibitions (particularly exhibition openings) as social gathering spaces.

⁵²⁷ Junyee, "The Artist and His Environment," From where??? (Originally found in Junyee CCP Curatorial files)

⁵²⁸ Junyee, "The Artist and His Environment."

complicated, his growing need for materials continued to be fed by the mountain. Junyee noted that the mountain, “patiently guides me along the path of indigenous art-making.”⁵²⁹

Though Junyee had received a Special Award at the First National Sculpture Exhibition in 1968, it was not until the Art Association of the Philippines gave Junyee the 1974 Grand Award, a recognition bestowed upon the best work of painting, sculpture, or print in the entire annual exhibition, that Junyee became a more established name in the Philippine art world. He received the award shortly after he returned from Mt. Makiling with *Our Woods*, a mahogany sculpture of identical, half-leaning rectangular beams linked to a hefty, asymmetrical log through precarious metal connections. The mahogany wood had been donated by U.P.-Los Baños Forest Products Research and Industries Development Commission (FORPRIDECOM), an organization founded in Los Baños in 1957 charged with “pioneer[ing] improved techniques to use forest products, including resins and...lumberyard sawdust.”⁵³⁰ Junyee noted that since the sculpture is “only held together by a tiny wire” it “swings like branches” from nature. The title of *Our Woods* also seems to have touch of biographical reference, as Junyee himself had just returned from a long exploration of natural detritus in the woods of Los Baños.

[fig. 4.1] Unlike his later work, such as *Urban Series I* or *Wood Things*, the organic components of *Our Woods* have smooth, finished surfaces, indicating Junyee’s mastery over his crude tools.⁵³¹ The beams appear similar in size and shape and uniformly angle away from the contorted log, as if they are in the midst of pulling that cumbersome piece of timber into their throng. The modernist grid also returns; the beams are streamlined into a gridded footprint of five by four that creates an impression of discipline and order. Tension plays an important role in

⁵²⁹ Junyee, “The Artist and His Environment.”

⁵³⁰ Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 28.

⁵³¹ In interview with author, Junyee remarked, “I carved it myself. I was very strong then, I was very young.”

the sculpture as the taut, string-like connection further emphasizes the struggle of the lone log against the pull of the regimented group of identical beams. According the Junyee, the sculpture was held together by a single piece of wire woven through the twenty beams to connect them to the dilapidated log.

Both the gridded configuration of beams and the lone log are slightly elevated by a thin platform made from a piece of board.⁵³² Cut out from the board is a rectangle that leaves a shallow indentation between the group and the log, suggesting that if the log succumbed to the tension of the string, it might fall and remain stuck in the rectangle-shaped imprint. While the beams seem to be actively pulling the unwieldy log as they all slant decidedly away from it, the log itself is horizontally oriented and seems to passively drag across the surface of the baseboard. Though the misshapen log lacks the uniformity of the finished beams, the smooth exterior of it indicates that, like its vertical counterparts, the large chunk of wood set on the floor has also been manipulated by the artists' intentions.

While the beams in *Our Woods* are just taller than a chair—too small to necessarily be human sized—the impulse to anthropomorphize them occurs as the viewer associates the uprightness of the beams and their arrangement as an organized formation of people, or maybe even a group of uniformed military, dragging something that has fallen on the ground. The homogeneity of the slanted vertical beams makes the group appear cold and calculated; as a group they seem to exemplify doggedness at the hard work of pulling the reclined wooden thing. The thin wire connection strains against the weight of the struggle, as the string appears to just lift the very end of the strangely carved log up from the baseboard. *Our Woods* seems to

⁵³² Junyee stated that the platform was “very insignificant” and “temporary” because he “could not afford to make a very expensive pedestal.”

abstractly demonstrate the effectiveness of unity to accomplish a task—a visual embodiment of how working together operates.

Junyee has given the log an unwieldy and unusual shape, which further highlights the great lengths the beams must go to move the object. Yet, the eccentricity of its shape causes the viewer to perhaps feel more empathetic with the charmingly funny-shaped horizontal figure. Compared to the ordinary looking beams that lack distinct characteristics, the log's flared end and indented center is individualized, its imperfect shape more easily relatable to people than the mechanical coolness of the uniform beams. The log might not be an object exemplifying the labor of the people, but rather the abstraction of another person being dragged into submission. While the struggle is apparent, the message oscillates between one of the virtues of working together and the danger of succumbing to the sinister expectations of a group.

When asked why he contrasted the uniform grid of beams with the misshapen log, Junyee offhandedly remarked, “Just for contrast. Because it looks like *Spoliarium*.” [fig. 4.11] Painted by Filipino artist Juan Luna, *Spoliarium* (1884) is one of the most famous oil paintings by a Filipino painter. The massive painting, which measures approximately 14 feet x 25 feet, is currently displayed at the National Museum of the Philippines in Manila as their pièce de résistance. Luna submitted *Spoliarium* to the *Exposición Nacional de Bellas Artes* in Madrid in 1884, where it received the first gold medal; *Spoliarium* holds pride of place in Philippine art history because it was the first time an artwork by a Filipino had not only won an international competition but had won one over their Spanish colonizers.

Spoliarium depicts a scene in the Roman Coliseum in which the bloodied bodies of fallen gladiators, who had been enslaved to “entertain their Roman oppressors with their lives,” are

being dragged away from the arena.⁵³³ One of the slaves is held by his arm, his back contorted into an arched position while his legs scrape along the ground. The other is bound multiple times with brown rope by which his oppressor drags his lifeless body across the floor. National hero and Filipino nationalist José Rizal, who lead political reforms for the Philippines under Spain, interpreted the painting as an allegorical reference to the struggle of the Filipino nation under the Spaniards.⁵³⁴ Like *Spoliarium*, *Our Woods* also embodied an element of struggle as the dilapidated log pulled against the ordered masses. *Our Woods* might also be an allegory of struggle between Junyee and larger society or between the Artist, an out of sync, misshapen character, and the order of government. Yet, on the other hand, *Our Woods* and the communal connotation of its title also appears to demonstrate the pressure of a group of beams working together to successfully move an object.

Both abstract and referential, *Our Woods* is an early example of how narrative operates as a constant flux of multiple meanings and no meaning at all within Junyee's installations. Junyee's 1974 AAP victory took place in a moment when those in the art world and beyond took an interest in using local materials to produce cultural artifacts. *Our Woods* reflects that interest in using local materials in a manner that aligned with more abstracted and conceptual interests of artists during that period, all while maintaining a certain level of legibility and narrative. Those judging the AAP competition in 1974 found allure in *Our Woods* as it occupied a place between the figural and the abstract, the conceptual and the visual, and embodied the potential ambiguity of narrative and purpose.

⁵³³ Leon Guerrero, *The First Filipino: A Biography of José Rizal* (Manila: National Historical Commission, 1974), 114.

⁵³⁴ Guerrero, *The First Filipino*, 114-115.

His victory earned him P10,000 (which Junyee stated was “unheard of during this time”) and national attention towards his art and his donors at U.P.-Los Baños, who wanted to continue to donate materials for his next projects as part of a “wood promotion mandate.”⁵³⁵ Titled *Malabayabas, and other types of wood in the sculpture of Junyee (Malabayabas at iba pang Kahoy sa Iskultura ni Junyee)*, the exhibition took place in a heavily trafficked part of Rizal Park down the street from the CCP on Roxas Boulevard. For the work, Junyee used hardwood to construct several modular towers, each standing about ten to twelve feet high, on site at Rizal Park. Junyee described *Malabayabas* as an “installation made out of sculptures.” All of the planks were supplied by pre-carved to Junyee’s specifications by FORPRIDECOM. Most of the hardwood was *malabayabas*, a material Junyee was quick to point out is the second hardest wood in the world.

[fig. 4.12] The only visual documentation available of *Malabayabas* comes from a rare photograph taken by sculptor/art columnist Imelda Pilapil. The photograph shows Rizal Park bustling with people who throw curious looks at the out-of-place structures. The tower in the foreground includes identical beams of wood overlaid on top of each other to create a crude structure with a hollow center. To the right of the stacked tower, toward the background of the photograph, is another structure with a dome-shaped top constructed by slender wooden beams, which according to Ruiz, “harks somewhat to a Thai Spirit House.”⁵³⁶ The crude wooden dome is held up by four posts, recalling the familiar shelter structure of *Balag* at U.P.

⁵³⁵ Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 49. The prize for Thirteen Artists at the CCP was around P1,500, or enough “to ‘stretch canvas’ or for ‘a few drinks,’” when it first started in 1970. See R.C. Ladrado, “The Thirteen Artists –Then and Now,” *Kultura* 1, no. 1 (1988): 47. Also see Kalaw-Ledesma, *The Struggle for Philippine Art*, 125 for more information about the cash allotted to *Thirteen Artists* recipients.

⁵³⁶ Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 147.

Ruiz writes that *Malabayabas* was “an abstract showcase of forest product” that took place during a “spike in activity for local artists.” Ruiz suggests that the IMF-World Bank conference hosted by the Marcoses in October 1976 in the “freshly constructed Philippine International Convention Center (PICC)” coincided with the spike in artistic activity—including the opening of two major museums, the Metropolitan Museum of Manila and the Museum of Philippine Art (MOPA) and the “blow-ups” of works by Filipino artists, young and old, in acrylic latex on the side of large buildings. Ruiz further argues that the Marcos administration had “mobilized the state apparatuses to festoon Metro Manila in art” with the goal “to impress their IMF-World Bank delegates/patrons that progress indeed [had] come from the massive loans they had advanced the autocracy.”⁵³⁷ *Malabayabas* took place “a few months ahead of this political/economic/cultural extravaganza” and stayed in Rizal Park for “several months, possibly even until October.”⁵³⁸

Ruiz, himself a long-time artist and friend of Junyee’s, connects *Malabayabas* with other major artistic efforts championed by the Marcos administration in 1976, suggesting the outdoor installation might have been part of the regime’s agenda to impress foreigners. Like Imelda’s Coconut Palace, *Malabayabas*, which was supported through an organization formed to promote Philippine forest products, was a display of indigenous materials to prove that the Philippines was a place worthy of international investment. Yet, Ruiz never directly claims that *Malabayabas* might have served this purpose. He only implies that it was “possibly” still up during the IMF-World Bank conference as Junyee had mounted it “a few months ahead,” which

⁵³⁷ Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 148.

⁵³⁸ Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 148.

suggests that *Malabayabas* would have only coincidentally overlapped with the IMF-World Bank conference.⁵³⁹

On the one hand, Ruiz's need to place *Malabayabas* in the burgeoning artistic milieu as one instrumentalized for an upcoming international conference and his evasion of directly associating the exhibition with its goals might be the result of lacking documentation or memory. He is unsure, despite extensive interviews with Junyee, whether *Malabayabas* was actually up during the IMF-World Bank Conference, and therefore cannot make that claim. On the other, Ruiz understands the danger or fear of too closely aligning an artist to the Marcoses in the Philippines, lest he be accused of being a Marcos sympathizer, and may choose this tactic to avoid questions of direct compliance. Yet, if that were the case, he could have omitted that discussion altogether.

I propose instead that Ruiz juxtaposes *Malabayabas* with the artistic activities surrounding the IMF-World Bank conference to demonstrate that while *Malabayabas* could have fulfilled the regime's vision of a progressive country for foreign approval, the ephemeral installation also gently pushed back, or rubbed against, these intentions. Ruiz's discussion contrasts *Malabayabas*, Junyee's "largest transient work thus far" and its lack of documentation with "two grand art venues" that exist today, and paintings blown up to be displayed on the surface of large buildings in Manila.⁵⁴⁰ Against the backdrop of these permanent buildings, some adorned with the best of contemporary Philippine art, *Malabayabas* appeared to be collection of flimsy, transitory, and inhabitable structures with no solid surfaces. Their transience permits

⁵³⁹ Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 148.

⁵⁴⁰ Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 148.

them to only “possibly” be displayed during the conference, and therefore only “possibly” used as a tool of cultural excellence and economic potential by the Marcoses’ regime.

Junyee also found a method of escape in embracing the transience. Looking back at the one extant photograph, one might feel that Junyee’s towers were ancillary to people who would have come for a stroll in the park regardless of their existence. The man with a child in the foreground of the photograph throws a quick glance towards a stacked tower to his left, but his sightline remains uncertain. No crowd seems to surround the towers, and the people nearby face away from the structures. In the background, however, a small group gathers to examine some signage or a poster in front of a flag pole. The poster, made by Boy Yñiguez, was actually a promotional poster for *Malabayabas*.⁵⁴¹ [fig. 4.13] A large part of the poster includes Junyee as he is enclosed within a stacked wooden tower. As the tower increases in height, Junyee is first shown listening to headphones with one ear covered, then with half his mouth taped close, then with one eye concealed in dark sunglasses. He stands inside the tower until it grows so overwhelmingly high that he hangs all his belongings, including his pants, and walks away from the structure, naked and without possessions.

Ruiz writes that the poster “was a commentary on...Martial Law that suppressed political expression.”⁵⁴² Ruiz further explains that in the poster, Junyee “parodies hear no evil, speak no evil, and see no evil by going ‘half-way.’” The performance of only “half-way” hearing no evil, speaking no evil and seeing no evil reflects Junyee’s real life participation in the art world. While *Malabayabas* might have been “in line with the administration’s policy to bring art closer to the common *tao* [people],” as one newspaper review claimed, its promotional poster suggested that

⁵⁴¹ Along with the poster, Junyee noted that the outdoor installation had no individual titles, just labels that stated, “Please Touch,” “Please Climb,” and “Please Enter.”

⁵⁴² Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 22.

his compliance was also only “halfway.” Junyee affirmed, “This is my poster against the Marcos dictatorship...The idea is, there was martial law [and] I was half listening, half not listening, half seeing, half talking....all one half.” Once the tower became too high Junyee stated that “before the forces of restriction built up...I was out already.” Junyee noted that *Malabayabas* was after his time in Mt. Makiling, stating, “Because during that time I already burned all my things. Until now, I still have that element of power. I can walk away from anything...I can basically walk without regrets because I have done it several times.” Junyee’s ephemeral installations and their connection to the land appears to free him from the constraints of governance. As the poster advertises, one could always walk away.

Wood Things Infiltrate the CCP

[fig. 4.14] Pooled in the corner of the room at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila are hordes of brown acacia pods that appear to wiggle and squirm like swarms of wet worms. On top of the brambly pods sit a few rectangular shaped forms with bristly exteriors made of the same natural detritus found underneath them. The forms, which the artist affectionately referred to as “pets,” crawl on the walls in two demi-arc formations as they creep into the corners and the cracks of the pristine white gallery.⁵⁴³ A handful of more ambitious ones even make it to the light fixtures on the ceiling.⁵⁴⁴ Others nest deep into the crevices between the walls and the ceiling, prickling their way into the unseen spaces behind the gallery walls and into human imagination. Their uniform size and rectangle bodies call attention to their intentional construction, like things that have broken out of the modernist grid. Despite their appearance of made-ness, the creatures

⁵⁴³ Raymundo R. Albano, “Junyee’s Woodland Fantasy,” *Philippine Art Supplement* 2, no. 3 (May/June 1981): 5.

⁵⁴⁴ Junyee has suggested that these “maverick” wanderers resemble himself, someone who “is called a maverick” in his time.

seem to emerge, proliferate and disintegrate as natural phenomena from the clusters of brown pods. Simultaneously disgusting and slightly cute, the pets oscillate between creepy natural vermin that invade the pristine gallery and man-made, overstuffed, and oversized creatures that elicit vague affection or curiosity. With its incorporation of indigenous materials that refuse fixed narrative, *Wood Things* generates worlds that are alternative to the one it inhabits, demonstrating how Junyee's installation privileges the spaces unseen as much as those seen. More than mere shorthand form of local specificity, indigenous materials permitted Junyee to explore a place or space beyond the confines of what was present.

Junyee reconstructed *Wood Things* for the Metropolitan Museum in 2014. [fig. 4.15] He had first exhibited *Wood Things* towards the end of martial law in 1980 as his first solo exhibition in the CCP.⁵⁴⁵ Whereas the remake at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila is a remake that has been swept into the corner of the room, the original installation occupied the entire space Small Gallery.⁵⁴⁶ In a decade heavily predicated on the indigenous as a mobile and legible form of cultural power, Junyee's so-called indigenous things invade (or escape from) the sterile, air-conditioned gallery space. Made from dried banana stalk stuffed with banana leaves and pricked with acacia pods to resemble vermin, *Wood Things* carries a double connotation of indigeneity. Junyee not only made them out of indigenous materials, but also made them to recall the vermin—such as roaches, ants, and termites—that scurry throughout Manila (and not just the woods), their prickly feet tickling the city's many surfaces. Exhibited within the CCP, a modern,

⁵⁴⁵ Albano had invited him after his first installation at the CCP, which was a “large ovoid nest” made from langka and sampaloc samplings bounded together by a jumble of vines exhibited in a group exhibition at the CCP Main Gallery. Junyee called the work *Abortion* and gathered the natural debris (Junyee never cut living plant-life for materials) used for its construction. Ruiz argues that the work might have “carried parallels with human abortion” but that the title was “pointed at nature itself, as an ecosphere that was being taken for **grants**, abused, overexploited and thus being ‘aborted,’ whether by design or neglect.” In Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 150.

⁵⁴⁶ In the interview with the author, Junyee laments the fact that the janitors at the Metropolitan Museum constantly sweep *Wood Things* into the corners, trying to contain its perimeters.

clean environment meant to elevate the Philippines into “the sunlit circle of the human family,” *Wood Things* demonstrated that the perimeters of art, like roaches, could not be contained or controlled.⁵⁴⁷

Wood Things was also not the first time an artist brought natural ephemera into the CCP Small Gallery. Another notable solo exhibition presented in the gallery was Laudico’s *An Exhibition of Three Works*, which consisted of three weeklong installations from February 18 to March 17, 1975. Laudico received *Thirteen Artists* recognition in 1974, but instead of participating in the 1974 group exhibition, she chose to mount three successive installations in the Small Gallery. [fig. 4.16] Laudico had initially questioned the privileging of painting with her play on the word “oil” in oil painting by using crude oil in two-dimensional work, and her installation at the Small Gallery continued to push the boundaries of painting in the Philippines. The horizontal strands of banana leaves purposefully come away from the wall, just far enough to cast broad shadows that resemble broad, truncated brushstrokes. The shadows were impermanent, “found” painterly marks, alluding to the ephemerality of painting itself in favor of more indigenous materials. The migration of the work away from the wall further emphasizes the movement of Philippine art from painting. Throughout the course of the week, crude oil slowly oozed from the soaked banana leaves onto the ground, staining the interior of the CCP. The residual drip marks are simultaneously painterly and filthy, straddling the line of what constituted art and trash.

Despite his initial reluctance to exhibit in the CCP, Junyee decided to use his solo exhibition to bring the grimy world outside into the cool, air-conditioned gallery environment. Ruiz describes the viewer’s experience as “entering a small air-conditioned art gallery and

⁵⁴⁷Imelda Marcos as quoted in Pedro R Nervasa, “The Cultural Center of the Philippines—Asia’s Mecca of the Arts.” *Business Chronicle*, May 31, 1970, 8–29.

stumbling into a den of fat, foot-long mutant crawlies.”⁵⁴⁸ Like *Our Woods*, Junyee’s pets also retain this tension between raw materiality and narrative reference. The title—*Wood Things*—is similarly ambiguous.⁵⁴⁹ For the original exhibition, Junyee insisted on red lamps to create a glow in the gallery that resembled the soft pink light of dusk during the very end of a sunset. Wood as a modifier in this case could refer to its materiality, as in a thing made of wood (which Junyee’s *Wood Things* are not) or to place, suggesting that these things belong or emerge from the woods.

While Junyee may refer to the rectangular units colloquially as “pets,” in the title he labels them as things—a designation that seems to counter the utilitarian value of objects such as pottery and baskets displayed at the aforementioned design fair. Unlike the Imelda’s coconut palace or the objects displayed at *New Directions*, which functioned as indigenous symbols of Philippine economic prosperity and independence, Junyee’s *Wood Things* elicit visceral responses as we encounter its prickly surfaces. These *things* constantly shift and are at flux. While they might vaguely resemble the roaches, they are too big and too rectangular to be naturalistic representation of vermin. Instead, the viewer encounters the thingness of these units—their prickly surfaces and crowded arrangements—as a sensation of bugs rather than visual representations as such. Junyee expressed, “Before the opening, before the show, I stood there alone [in the Small Gallery] and after a while I feel itchy....It’s so powerful that you itch.”

Albano reviews *Wood Things* in the *Philippine Art Supplement*, a short-lived CCP publication from the 1980s. He notes, “Children, romantics and cynics of contemporary art will find Junyee’s exhibition at the CCP Small Gallery a delight...His reference to the work as ‘pets’

⁵⁴⁸ Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 152.

⁵⁴⁹ Ruiz suggests that the pets were “appropriately named because they resembled nothing specifically, but suggested so much about the organic environment.” Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 152.

connotes intimacy and cuteness.”⁵⁵⁰ Taken as a single unit, the pets might be considered cute, like the “chubby caterpillars.”⁵⁵¹ The pressing component of *Wood Things* does not come from the form of the puffy bug bodies, which on their own, might be considered “decorative” rectangular adornments on a wall.⁵⁵² Instead, the dense grouping of the pets together—particularly within the cramped corners of the room—constitutes the installation’s most terrifying aspect. For the original installation, the bugs were not only cramped in the corners, but also throughout the whole gallery, since Junyee constructed five hundred of them and “spread them all over the floor, densely, with just enough gaps so that a viewer might walk gingerly into the space.”⁵⁵³ On the walls and ceilings, they crawled in a loose spiral formation. Clumped in the bottom corner of the gallery, the rectangular forms appear to simultaneously emerge *from* and dissolve *into* the pool of pods. The symmetrical prickly construction of the pets refuses orientation—we are unsure whether the pets are coming or going, forming or disintegrating.

Since the viewer cannot surmise the direction of the bugs without a distinction between head and body, the pets could either be falling into the detritus or surfacing from it. The ambiguity denies a fixed narrative of causation, permitting one to consider the pool of natural ephemera as both generative and destructive. A few pets seem to float casually atop the accumulation of the pods. Although the presence of raw materials imply that the pet might be coming into being or dematerializing, Junyee only exhibits the pets as fully formed, never in the process of forming or disintegrating. The contents inside the bug bodies are left up to the viewer’s imagination—a physical manifestation of the unseen or unknown.

⁵⁵⁰ Albano, “Junyee’s Woodland Fantasy,” 5.

⁵⁵¹ Ruiz describes the pets as “chubby caterpillars” in *Wood Things*, 142.

⁵⁵² Albano, “Junyee’s Woodland Fantasy,” 5.

⁵⁵³ Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 142–143.

At the Metropolitan Museum, the pets found at the top corner of the gallery further reinforce the importance of the unseen in Junyee's installation. Nestled deep into the gaps between the ceiling and the wall, the ambiguity of orientation applies to the ceiling corner in similar fashion to the bottom one. The pets appear to simultaneously emerge and disappear into the recesses of the wall, infiltrating the spaces of the gallery that are not seen. Regardless of which direction the bugs are going—into or out of the gallery, the viewer remains certain that behind the walls and the visible space of the gallery, there must be more of them. The fear or disgust that *Wood Things* elicits comes not from the neatly packaged bug bodies, but from the way they fade into unknown realms and unseen places. The use of natural materials further emphasizes the capacity for these creatures to proliferate without the human intervention in the way that only natural things could.

Wood Things alluded to the real world outside the walls of the Cultural Center—one of poverty overrun with various forms of vermin. By bringing critters constructed of local, organic Philippine materials, such as banana leaves and acacia pods, Junyee implies that the demand for indigeneity is not so easily packaged and necessarily includes the dirty bits—the roaches and other vermin that dwell in the cracks of the city. The call to bring the indigenous into the gallery, to tame or domesticate the indigenous brings certain levels of risk—also questions the ability to conceal the actual state in Manila through this performance of pristine buildings. Despite the Marcos regime's careful surveillance, tight authoritarian control, and attempt to create a clean, modern space for art, they could not control the unseen. While Junyee's pets may be "cute" or "domesticated" in their neat rectangular forms, their formation suggests that underneath the walls was an infiltration of bristly critters that could and would continue to multiply.

And *Wood Things* did multiply and infiltrate into the world. Although Junyee often describes his installations as ephemeral, the materials that compose the work, though subject to deterioration, were often given away or distributed to people after an installation was taken down. For example, since Junyee refused to sell the works in *Malabayabas*, the valuable pieces of wood were given away in Manila because Junyee did not have the resources to transport the materials back to Los Baños. Concerning *Wood Things*, as a “tribute to the popular aura of the piece, many of the staffers and assistants at the CCP asked for several things as souvenirs or keepsakes.”⁵⁵⁴ Junyee only kept a handful of the chubby caterpillars for himself. Thus, when art historian Patrick Flores requested that Junyee reconstruct *Wood Things* for the Metropolitan Museum, the bugs multiplied to fill another space.

Contemporary Indigenous Art Infects the Galleries

Though Junyee has been using materials drawn from the local environment since the 1970s, contemporary indigenous art as a practice that centered on local materials was not codified in the Philippines until the mid-1980s. In 1984, Junyee was among a number of artists who took part of an ambitious multi-gallery exhibition that featured indigenous materials entitled *Ugat Suri* (roughly translated as *A Search for Roots*). Curated by Eva Toledo and Rodolfo Paras-Perez, the latter the founder and chancellor of the ASEAN Institute of Art (AIA), the exhibition took place in eight of the most prominent galleries in Manila, including Luz Gallery, City Gallery, the Rear Room, and Sining Kamalig.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵⁴ Ruiz, *Wood Things*, 143.

⁵⁵⁵ It was noted in various publications from the period, including Angel G. De Jesus, “Reflections on ‘Ugat Suri,’” *Business Day*, March 1, 1984 that The Luz Gallery exhibition actually took place at the Museum of Philippine Art (MOPA).

Held from late February to March in 1984, *Ugat Suri* was intended to coincide and complement the 3rd ASEAN Travelling Exhibition of Paintings and Photographs at the CCP Main and Small Galleries. While the exhibition at the CCP would showcase works from the five ASEAN countries of the period (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand), both exhibitions were part of the month-long, 3rd annual ASEAN Art Festival hosted by the Philippines. The First and 2nd ASEAN Art Festival had previously taken place in Singapore and Jakarta respectively.⁵⁵⁶ Artists who participated in *Ugat Suri* included more established artists who usually employed a range of material and media such as Arturo Luz, Napoleon Abueva, Manuel Rodriguez Jr., and Jaime De Guzman as well as artists known for drawing on specifically indigenous influences such as Paz Abad Santos and co-founder of the Baguio Arts Guild, Santiago Bose.⁵⁵⁷

The ASEAN exhibition at the CCP included over 100 paintings and photographs chosen by curators from the original five ASEAN countries. According to Albano, who was serving as the director of the museum division of the CCP at that time, the ASEAN show “aim[ed] to promote regional consciousness and cooperation among the artists from the ASEAN nations and the public...through the visual arts.”⁵⁵⁸ The theme that year was “ASEAN art in a changing world” and included “collages, constructions and prints from Bangkok watercolors and hand-

⁵⁵⁶ Angel G. De Jesus, “Reflections on ‘Ugat Suri,’” *Business Day*, March 1, 1984; Susan Castro, “ASEAN Artists in One Exhibit,” *Times Journal*, March 1, 1984. Since the Philippines was hosting this year’s ASEAN Art Festival, Manila was the first city to exhibit the work.

⁵⁵⁷ In “A Savage Look at Indigenous Art,” Santiago Bose writes that “the term ‘Philippine indigenous art’ was used by art critics as a convenient name to describe contemporary art practice that is made outside Manila, where artists use local materials and merge contemporary forms with traditional ones.” Bose, the leader of the Baguio Arts Guild, served as somewhat of a poster child for contemporary indigenous art as one made outside of Manila. What I hope *Ugat Suri* demonstrates, however, is as contemporary indigenous art became codified as a practice in the Philippines in the 1980s, the focus seemed to be around local materials and less about place. Santiago Bose, “A Savage Look at Indigenous Art,” in *Memories of Overdevelopment: Philippine Diaspora in Contemporary Art*, ed. by Wayne Baerwaldt (Irvine, California: University of California, Irvine, Art Gallery, 1997), 31.

⁵⁵⁸ “ASEAN Artists in One Exhibit,” *Times Journal*, March 1, 1984.

made paper constructions from Kuala Lumpur, scrolls and oil on paper from Singapore, relief and folk drawings from Indonesia; and a few works on paper from Manila.”⁵⁵⁹ Critic Angel G. De Jesus reflected in his “Vignettes” column that “The ASEAN countries have expanded the terms of their regional cooperation of economics to politics to include art and music. This is as it should be since knowledge of their individual cultures is necessary for understanding cooperation by the ASEAN countries.”⁵⁶⁰

Art critic Leonidas Benesa observed that while the CCP ASEAN exhibition was billed as an exhibition of painting and photography, the primary theme of the exhibition was ultimately works on paper. While he noted that “one way of approaching the works in this exhibition by artists from the original five countries of ASEAN is to examine how paper is used as an art medium,” he ultimately laments that “Indeed, although the paper medium was the rationale of the show in the first place, most of the artists taking part appeared to have used the material incidentally... Thus many watercolors and graphic works were included in the selection simply because the artists working in these media usually use paper.”⁵⁶¹ Benesa suggested that the inclusion of paper in many of the works was incidental to its medium; the works displayed were not necessarily the most innovative practices, but rather ones that have always been done on

⁵⁵⁹ “ASEAN Artists in One Exhibit.”

⁵⁶⁰ De Jesus, “Reflections on ‘Ugat Suri,’ *Business Day*, March 1, 1984. ASEAN had had vested cultural interests at least since 1974. That year, the ASEAN Mobile Exhibition passed through Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Jakarta, Manila and Bangkok. According to the *Times Journal* on August 17, 1974, it was the first exhibition of its kind and intended to “promote regional consciousness among artists and the public through art.” Imelda Marcos “expressed hope that through the traveling art show mutual understanding among the ASEAN countries will be further enhanced.” In that same article, according to Carlos Romulo, the foreign secretary of the period noted that “The success of an organization like the ASEAN...depends on the...development of a hierarchy of shared values, for only shared values impel people to act together.”

⁵⁶¹ Leonidas V. Benesa, “Paper as Art Medium in Touring ASEAN Exhibition,” *Philippine Daily Express*, March 8, 1984.

paper. While Benesa felt that some of the ASEAN artists participating in the exhibition did not present new or original ideas, he eventually lauds the exhibition's efforts, writing:

The current ASEAN art exhibition is an answer to a felt need among the peoples in the region to discover—or if necessary to generate—their collective identity through culture. Any effort or excuse including the use of paper or any other material, to bring about his epiphany of the spirit, and must be exploited in full.⁵⁶²

Benesa's statement reflected the desire for regional cultural collaboration in Southeast Asia at all costs and opportunities.

As regionalism became an increasingly pertinent topic in Southeast Asia, the 3rd annual ASEAN Art Festival in Manila presented an opportunity and an audience for Filipino artists to place themselves as leaders in the region. Organizers of *Ugat Suri* wanted to unite the ASEAN countries through a new methods and materials for art-making that were currently used in the Philippines. Whereas the travelling exhibition at the CCP included works by artists from the five ASEAN countries, *Ugat Suri* included works exclusively by Filipino artists. De Jesus described *Ugat Suri* “a presentation of the Philippine ‘country’ art image.”⁵⁶³ Both Filipino and other ASEAN delegates attended the opening of *Ugat Suri*, which included a speech by former Foreign Minister Carlos P. Romulo, who, during his time as the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, cut the ribbon for the *First ASEAN Art and Photographic Exhibition of Life and Landscape* a decade prior. The ASEAN delegates were also given copies of *Ugat Suri*, a book featuring the Philippine artists in the exhibition.

⁵⁶² Benesa, “Paper as Art Medium in Touring ASEAN Exhibition.”

⁵⁶³ De Jesus, “Reflections on ‘Ugat Suri,’ *Business Day*, March 1, 1984.

The organizers of *Ugat Suri* published the accompanying catalogue a month before the exhibition.⁵⁶⁴ *Ugat Suri*'s short preface includes the exhibition's mission signed by Paras-Perez and Toledo. In their preface, Paras-Perez and Toledo contrast *Ugat Suri*, which featured works made from "indigenous art materials" to the Philippines, with the ASEAN exhibition at the CCP, "whose main focus is—paper."⁵⁶⁵ While they claim that *Ugat Suri* simply complemented the CCP exhibition by emphasizing indigenous materials largely omitted from the exhibition, they call out paper as a material indigenous to "China and Japan" rather than Southeast Asia. The organizers also express in the preface that "paper as an art medium...has gained currency abroad, particularly in the United States."⁵⁶⁶

Ugat Suri's preface positions paper, the central medium at the CCP ASEAN exhibition, as one associated with East Asia and the West. While the organizers of *Ugat Suri* wanted to establish a distinct Southeast Asian identity, they do so with East Asia and the West as their conscious counterparts. In place of paper, Paras-Perez and Toledo propose raw materials indigenous to Southeast Asia as a way asserting national and regional cultural independence. They suggest, "Wood, fiber and fabrics, bamboo, barks and brass, adobe and clay, are as indigenous in terms of art material to the Philippines, perhaps also within the ASEAN region." Indigenous materials were highlighted not only as a means to establish national specificity, but also a potential tool for regional affiliation.

⁵⁶⁴ In Leonidas V. Benesa, "Ugat-Suri: Search for Roots in ASEAN Context," *Philippine Daily Express*, February 23, 1984, Benesa called the text, "a most welcome development" and "the encouragement of new critical thinking in this country and in the region." The publication includes brief essays on the exhibiting artists and participating galleries alongside black and white images of the artists' works. Kalaw-Ledesma conducted the research for the catalogue and the most prominent Filipino writers and critics of the period, including Benesa himself, contributed to it. Among the other writers included Alice Guillermo and the curators of *Ugat Suri*, Paras-Perez and Toledo. The contributors committed to creating an influential exhibition and text; Paras-Perez had received his PhD in art history from Harvard in the 1970s and Toledo had recently returned from studying museology in Europe for two years.

⁵⁶⁵ Rod Paras-Perez and Eva Toledo, "Preface," *Ugat-Suri* (Manila: ASEAN Institute of Art, 1984), 1.

⁵⁶⁶ Perez and Toledo, "Preface," 1.

Short essays discussing individual artists and participating galleries were split among the catalog writers, which included the organizers Paras-Perez and Toledo as well as Alice Guillermo, Benesa, Alfredo Navarro Salanga, and Anna Fer. Toledo wrote the brief entry about Junyee in *Ugat Suri*. In it, she compares sculpture “as an antecedent to the functionalist nature of architecture” to Junyee’s “non-utilitarian, ephemeral works.”⁵⁶⁷ Her comparison elicits images of Junyee’s hollowed *Malabayabas* towers in Rizal Park. By comparing Junyee’s work to antecedents of architecture—the building of particular place onto an unspecified space—Toledo implies that despite the specificity of their “indigenous” materials, they remain undefined and transient in ways that fail to demarcate place.

Toledo describes the materials generally used for Junyee’s installations as, “textured *kapok* pods, coconut shell, dried banana stalk, and acacia bark [that] interlock with one another—grasping, twisting, clinging like biomorphic objects or zoological creatures,” emphasizing that his creations appear “devoid of the hard polish and sophisticated sheen of metal or stone.”⁵⁶⁸ She further elaborates that Junyee’s creatures “deliberately stripped of the glory of pedestals and plinths” seem to “meander, crouch and climb walls, ceilings and floors.”⁵⁶⁹ Her description of Junyee’s work contrasts them to the standard expectations for sculpture—Junyee’s works are prickly, they seem move in uncomfortable ways, they fail to be controlled by the conventions that usually contain or elevate sculpture. Although they are still, they always appear on the precipice of movement. His works play true to the curators’ intentions—they “indicate the flexibility and openness” of sculpture.

⁵⁶⁷ Eva Toledo, “Junyee,” *Ugat-Suri* (Manila: ASEAN Institute of Art, 1984), 96.

⁵⁶⁸ Toledo, “Junyee,” 96.

⁵⁶⁹ Toledo, “Junyee,” 96.

[fig. 4.17] Junyee's contribution to *Ugat Suri* included a wall sculpture called *Urban Series I*. In a black and white photograph of *Urban Series I* in *Ugat Suri*, the sculpture initially appears like a diminutive, fuzzy critter crawling along the gallery wall, yet its large size belies its harmless appearance. *Urban Series I* measures a little over a foot high and six and a half feet in length, spanning a length longer than the height of a very tall human. While Toledo, as many others who write about Junyee's work, describes the artist's contribution to *Ugat Suri* as "ephemeral," *Urban Series I*'s decidedly solid wooden core and ever multiplying prickly exterior appears anything but on the verge of extinction or decay. Its large size proposes its capacity for infinite growth and perhaps infinite reproduction. What appears fleeting about *Urban Series I*, however, is the movement implied by the dozens of pods sticking out of the creature's main body as light shifts through the gallery space, leaving an impression of the scurried movement of insect legs.

Made from dried pods and twisted roots, *Urban Series I* fit the guidelines set by *Ugat Suri* and subsequent definitions of indigenous art as explorations of alternative, local, and indigenous materials used in high art. At one of its ends are two pieces of wood that diverge from one another like the antennae of a caterpillar or similar kind of insect. From that end, the twisted root appears like two thick braided ropes that taper to a slender finish. Prickly spikes made from the aforementioned *kapok* pods poke out of the roots from all sides. The bristly pods shift from signifying the endless, squirmy legs of a millipede or the topical fuzz of a caterpillar. Its spikes push right up along the wall as *Urban Series I* hangs like a large scar or stitched up wound flushed against the gallery's smooth surface.

Placing *Urban Series I* on the wall instead of the ground underscores its ability to infect all surfaces of the gallery. An insect on the ground is less threatening because as upright beings,

humans can step on them. Our orientation and our size allow us to have particular control over that encounter—the simple pressure applied by the sole of a shoe is generally enough to end the critter’s life. Yet, move that same bug to the wall or high on a ceiling and we are reminded of the natural world’s command over us—the insect’s capacity to defy gravity in a way incapable of humankind. While on the ground it might have appeared as an unthreatening bramble of natural detritus, on the wall, confronting the human gaze, *Urban Series I* reminds us of the natural world’s capacity to outdo and outrun us. Yet, unlike *Our Woods* or *Wood Things*, the title *Urban Series I* situates these works within the city and urban landscape rather than within nature. While *Wood Things* might appear to emerge from the woods, *Urban Series I* indicates a tension between the natural world and the manmade one. Though *Wood Things* appear to proliferate freely, *Urban Series I* remains alone, tame and hung on the wall.

[fig. 4.18] Along with *Urban Series I*, Junyee also exhibits *Urban Series II*. *Urban Series II*, like *Urban Series I* is also made out of organic materials including banana pulp, coconut shell, dried pods, and dried coconut twigs and hung against a wall. *Urban Series II* measures slightly less than four and a half feet high and forty inches long. Yet, unlike *Urban Series I*, which, though abstracted, resembles a magnified insect of some sort, *Urban Series II* is more ambiguous in its visual reference. Seven banana-leaf wrapped packages, roughly similar in size and shape, are tied together, balanced on a single, small boat-shaped banana leaf. Poking out from the edges of the packages are the same dried prickly pods used in *Urban Series I*, creating antennae-like filaments that emerge from the rectangular forms. The *kapok* pods also make the rectangular packages slightly threatening, as if prickly critters are about to break out of its cocoons, hatching throughout the duration of the exhibition. Once again, Junyee’s work seems anything but ephemeral or fleeting; in fact, *Urban Series II* seems on the precipice of multiplication.

At the bottom of the configuration is a small coconut shell that dangles underneath the single column of wrapped packages. The coconut shell is tied to the line of packages and a slender branch that curves due to the tension caused by the string that ties the pieces of *Urban Series II* together. Together the coconut and the slender branch seem precariously placed, as if they were parts of a trap to protect the stuffed packages from interference; in order to take a package, one would have to cut the string, causing the coconut to drop or the branch to swing upwards into the face of a potential pilferer.

Urban Series II, like *Urban Series I*, adheres to *Ugat Suri*'s exhibition guidelines as it also incorporates materials indigenous to the Philippines. The banana leaf wrapped packages, however, also seem to be a visual allusion to traditional Filipino *suman*, a sweet, glutinous rice cake wrapped in banana leaves used for celebrations and fiestas throughout the Philippines. Sculptor Virginia Ty-Navarro has called the act of wrapping *suman* "a fading folk art," as the practice varies by region and is usually passed generation to generation.⁵⁷⁰ According to Ty-Navarro, *suman*, which originated as a method for preserving and transporting rice over long journeys, was considered a symbol of good tidings and good luck.⁵⁷¹ While the rectangular packages in *Urban Series II* are more simply wrapped than some of the more elaborately executed *suman*, their shape and construction bear resemblance some simpler forms of these Filipino treats. The banana leaf packages in *Urban Series II* oscillate between being on the verge of multiplying and a visual reference to a "fading folk art."⁵⁷²

⁵⁷⁰ Virginia Ty-Navarro, "The art of wrapping 'suman,'" *Times Journal*, April 8, 1976.

⁵⁷¹ Ty-Navarro, "The art of wrapping 'suman.'"

⁵⁷² Ty-Navarro, "The art of wrapping 'suman.'"

Despite his participation in *Ugat Suri*, the exhibition that solidified indigenous art practices as a nationalistic one in the Philippines, he was not one of the more featured artists of the exhibition. While artists such as Francisco Verano or Paz Abad Santos were praised for their use of bamboo and burlap, Junyee received minimal mention in articles circulating about *Ugat Suri* in 1984. Following the exhibition and the release of its accompanying book, contributors to the catalog, including Benesa, Guillermo, Paras-Perez and other art critics who took no role in the publication, such as Angel de Jesus of *Business Day*'s frequent art column, *Vignettes*, wrote columns and articles of varied lengths about the exhibition and indigenous art in general. As collaborators of the *Ugat Suri* efforts, Benesa, Guillermo and Paras-Perez of course had mostly positive notes about the exhibition and on indigenous art. Benesa suggested that the exhibition, which featured works from exclusively Filipino artists, could be extrapolated to broader Southeast Asia. He argues, "In other words, one has to look for other materials aside from paper in any attempt to present Southeast Asian art in terms of materials that are truly indigenous and therefore for a more native or ethnic flavor, without limiting the meaning of the word 'ethnic' to scientific jargon of the social anthropologist."⁵⁷³

Of those writing favorably about the use of indigenous materials, Guillermo writes the most extensive article articulating their role in art in an article titled "The 'In' of Indigenous."⁵⁷⁴ In it, she argues that the choice of employing indigenous materials in art "constitutes...a political assertion of our cultural identity, vis-à-vis Western influence." She further asserts:

⁵⁷³ Leonidas V. Benesa, "Ugat-Suri: Search for Roots in ASEAN Context," *Philippine Daily Express*, February 23, 1984.

⁵⁷⁴ Alice G. Guillermo, "The 'In' of Indigenous," *WHO*, March 21, 1984.

From another angle, the auspicious move towards using indigenous materials will contribute to our efforts to create a distinctive art reflecting our culture within the setting of our natural environment, ecology, and tropical resources. Moreover, their successful use in art will go beyond the superficial plane of technique and manipulation of medium, to an art that suggests the intimate relationship between identity, temperament, or the Filipino psyche, if you will, and the factors of ecology and geography that play a part in the distinctive economic structure...⁵⁷⁵

Guillermo suggests that using indigenous materials reflect the surroundings and therefore creates distinctive art that reflects the specificity of place. She further implies that the implementation of indigenous materials allows for a greater democratization of art, as academic art had always privileged (and continues to privilege) painting. These hierarchies, Guillermo explains, are established by the academies, which “set down the norms of High Art that was the exclusive province of the elite.”⁵⁷⁶ Guillermo ultimately concludes her essay praising the exhibition and stating, “One must say that the Intergallery Exhibition was an unprecedented pooling together of artistic talents, and managerial expertise; a successful and happy occasion.”⁵⁷⁷

Not everyone reacted so positively to the exhibition, however. While *Ugat Suri* established the importance of using indigenous materials for high art in the Philippines, De Jesus expressed in his column on the exhibition that despite the inclusion of indigenous materials, the majority of the works exhibited were “stylistically Western.”⁵⁷⁸ De Jesus reprimanded the organizers of *Ugat Suri* for focusing too much on a materially based definition of indigenous art without considering “already established” artists who were demonstrating the local conditions

⁵⁷⁵ Guillermo, “The ‘In’ of Indigenous.”

⁵⁷⁶ Guillermo, “The ‘In’ of Indigenous.”

⁵⁷⁷ Guillermo, “The ‘In’ of Indigenous.”

⁵⁷⁸ Angel G. De Jesus, “Reflections on ‘Ugat Suri,’” *Business Day*, March 1, 1984.

and “present social realities” of the Filipino people like Social Realists Pablo Baens-Santos or Renato Habulan.⁵⁷⁹ According to De Jesus, while the works in *Ugat Suri* may have showcased indigenous materials, they failed to represent the genuine concerns of the Filipino people.

Though works by social realist artists such as Baens-Santos or Habulan might not fit the guidelines set out by the exhibition, such as works that incorporate local materials, De Jesus argued that these works were more genuine expressions of local realities that the exhibition organizers should have taken into consideration. To critics like De Jesus, this was especially true considering since social realist artists could not exhibit at the CCP, while installations made of similarly indigenous materials, such as Junyee’s *Wood Things* or Laudico’s *Untitled* banana leaf installation, had been exhibited in the CCP through the Marcos administration. De Jesus criticized the multi-gallery exhibition for not being a true antithesis to the CCP’s cultural agenda by continuing to ignore artists omitted from the institution.

De Jesus seemed to point out a cleavage in the organizers’ insistence that *Ugat Suri* was some sort of alternative response to the CCP’s exhibition. True, the former was more inclusionary, not only because of the materials displayed, but due to the multi-gallery model that led to an exhibition spread through the city, which ideologically contrasted with centralized display at the CCP. Yet, indigenous materials, as exemplified by Chabet, Laudico, and Junyee, had often been used for objects exhibited at the CCP. Moreover, *Ugat Suri*’s inclusion of established artists such as Luz and Abueva demonstrated the boundaries between the private galleries, alternative spaces, and the CCP to be more fluid than implied by some of the rhetoric around the exhibition.

Junyee considers *Ugat Suri* significant because it was the first time that commercial galleries and influential taste-makers in Manila recognized the importance of exhibiting works

⁵⁷⁹ Jesus, “Reflections on ‘Ugat Suri.’”

made from local materials and codified it as a symbol of Philippine nationalism. Despite the popularity of local materials prior to 1984, participation in *Ugat Suri* from a range of artists and writers gave critical attention and terminology to contemporary indigenous art. The multi-gallery exhibition put forth local materials as not just signifiers of place, but symbols of self-sufficiency in the face of dominant cultures such as the China, Japan, or the U.S that could be expanded to include the rest of the ASEAN countries.

A New Seed for the Philippines

In late February 1986, following an outpour of support for Corazon “Cory” Aquino to be the rightful elected leader of the Philippines during the Peoples Power Revolution, Marcos stepped down from power and fled from Malacañang Palace to Hawaii.⁵⁸⁰ Aquino then took over as the eleventh President of the Philippines, ending the Marcoses’ twenty-year rule over the Philippines. That same year, Junyee received his second Grand Award from the AAP Annual Art Exhibition at the Museum of Philippine Art (MOPA). Among a number of more political artworks chronicling the events of the People’s Power Movement, he had submitted a large hanging sculpture sourced from his usual indigenous materials called *Bagong Binhi*, or *New Seed* for the annual exhibition that year.

In one article chronicling the AAP Annual exhibition that year, Isagani R. Cruz praised the political content that artists included in the exhibition that year. Cruz wrote, “If you think artists either stayed home and watched the liberated Channel 4 or went out to EDSA and acted as

⁵⁸⁰ More information on the People’s Power Revolution, a nonviolent revolution which occurred primarily on Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA)—a major highway that runs through Metro Manila—after the 1986 election that once again resulted in Ferdinand Marcos’ dubious victory can be found in Mark Thompson, *The Anti-Marcos Struggle: Personalistic Rule and Democratic Transition in the Philippines* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995) and Vince Boudreau, “Chapter 8: People power and insurgency” *Resisting Dictatorship: Repression and Protest in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2004), 176-189.

mere bodies to block tanks with, you couldn't be more wrong. During the February unseating of the dictator, artists did what they do best. They stayed home (or at their studios) and painted, sculpted, or wrote.”⁵⁸¹ Cruz further observed that many of the works exhibited at the AAP show directly related to the People's Power Revolution, stating “No better proof of this can be cited than the current exhibit at the Museum of Philippine Art (MOPA). A collection of around 350 art pieces (oils, mixed media, graphic arts, sculpture), the exhibit is dominated by works explicitly on the February event.” While Cruz lauded the majority of the content in the exhibition, he concludes his review with negative sentiments regarding the actual prize winners of the exhibition (though he never calls out Junyee in particular). He lamented, “I also feel sad that, despite the enormous artistic potential of the February event, there are still art pieces as irrelevant and unreal as some of the other prize-winners and finalists (Were the judges turned off by direct political art?).”⁵⁸²

While Cruz expressed disappointment in the judges' decisions to avoid awarding more politically explicit artworks, another review in the *Manila Times* was more critical of the political content at the AAP Annual. In a brief review of the exhibition, Menchu Aquino Sarmiento wrote, “Many regard the events of last February 22 to 25 as miraculous. The uniformity of over half of the 350 works submitted to this year's AAP competition also seem miraculous. AAP might stand for Artists Are Politicized instead of Art Association of the Philippines. Philippine history since the death of Benigno ‘Ninoy’ Aquino has spawned a genre of art that one may tentatively label ‘Neo-Nationalist’ for lack of a better term.”⁵⁸³

⁵⁸¹ Isagani R. Cruz, “Artists Did Not Stand and Wait in February,” *Manila Times*, April 24, 1986, 10. Interesting to note that the *Manila Times*, which had been discontinued under Martial law, had only started again in March after the Marcoses had fled Manila.

⁵⁸² Cruz, “Artists Did Not Stand and Wait in February,” 10.

⁵⁸³ Menchu Aquino Sarmiento, “The Politicization of Artists,” *Manila Times*, April 23, 1986, 9.

According to Sarmiento's suggestive language, the People's Power Movement had the unfortunate consequence of curbing creativity and artistic production to "spawn" excessively political art. Sarmiento does, however, appear to admire Junyee's strange submission of indigenous materials that year. He wrote, "Easily the most popular work was Junyee's sculptured cocoon *Bagong Binhi*. For a month, Junyee, who is artist-in-residence at the U.P. scrounged for bamboo and rattan twigs and vines in the wilds of Makiling."⁵⁸⁴ The final installation was so large, "It took a six-by-six trunk to transport his baby."⁵⁸⁵ Junyee described *New Seed* as "historic" not necessarily because it was after the People's Power Revolution, but because it was the first time that an entry with "all indigenous" materials won an AAP award. Junyee stated that he called the installation *New Seed* because it exemplified a "new way of thinking and doing art sculpture or art pieces."⁵⁸⁶ For his award-winning work, Junyee used his earlier developed method of scrounging in the "wilds of Makiling."⁵⁸⁷

[fig. 4.19] Made from twigs, rattan, fiber, vines, leaves and bamboo, *New Seed* consists of a bulbous oblong shape—the seed—that hangs precariously along the length of a gnarled, fourteen-foot bamboo pole hung from the ceiling of the gallery. The giant seed appears on the precipice of falling away from the pole as it strains against the fine tendrils, made from rattan strap, that connect it, one of its ends pushing closer to the ground than the other. The seed's plenitude, its full oval body, contrasts with the delicate vines that futilely attempt to keep it attached to the pole. Similar to *Our Woods*, tension in the connections seems to create the precariousness between elements in the work. The tendrils continue to envelope the oblong,

⁵⁸⁴ Sarmiento, "The Politicization of Artists," 9.

⁵⁸⁵ Sarmiento, "The Politicization of Artists," 9.

⁵⁸⁶ Junyee interview with author.

⁵⁸⁷ Sarmiento, "The Politicization of Artists," 9.

creating an illusion of a gummy surface, like bits of spider web or the remains of sticky pulp that clings onto a seed.

Its large size, as indicated by the small the pedestals in the background, and placement towards the center of the room overwhelms the space and is completely out of scale with the gallery. The seed's surface is covered in spikes or spindles that appear to poke and prod out of the oblong. On second glance, the oblong also resembles a hive of some kind, with the suggestion of harmful creatures such as wasps swarming inside. With its commanding size and the ambiguity of its construction, the seed generates a sense of urgency and fear—if it were to drop, as it seems on the verge of doing, what alien creatures or things might emerge? Like *Wood Things*, *New Seed* seems to focus more on what is immediately present. Whereas the clusters of pots in *Wood Things* seems to indicate presence behind the walls and beyond the immediately visible, *New Seed*'s size and oval composition from organic materials appeals to presence as one not contingent on visibility, but on time. Within *New Seed*, or even *New Seed* itself, is something that grows and continues to expand over time.

One of the reasons why the judges might have awarded *New Seed* during a year so steeped in politics is that Junyee's hanging installation seemed on the verge of becoming rather than something that already was, revealing the potential to sprout and develop like the new Philippine nation itself. Instead of choosing a work that was too visibly political, the judges instead exercised their desire that was at the precipice of becoming rather than something that reflected the past—like a simple depiction of an event that had already happen like the People's Power Revolution. While Junyee remarked that *New Seed* was “not related to EDSA,” he affirmed, “Maybe it was at the back of my mind because we [were] entering a new...recapturing of freedom, a new phase of our political development...But as I have said before, all of my work

are political...Maybe because we were all ‘rally, rally!’ Even the professors and instructors [would say] ‘No class today! Let’s go, rally! Boycott classes!’”⁵⁸⁸

The emphasis of indigenous materials as markers of national autonomy and power in the Philippines dominated visual culture for much of the latter half of the twentieth century. Artists, designers, architects, musicians and others all took part in varied experimentations with these materials. In art, the use of alternative materials was considered, to some extent, a response to painting and its association with the West. These materials were often found in the natural world and meant to mark pride in the place they came from. Yet, Junyee complicated the indigenous as a marker of place. Close visual analysis of *Wood Things* and his other sculptures and installations from the period demonstrate how employment of indigenous materials in the Philippines permitted artists to explore the world as something more than what is immediately present, evading the question of place altogether.

⁵⁸⁸ Junyee, interview with author.

EPILOGUE

[fig. 5.1 – 5.2] On September 27, 2017 sheets of flying newspaper showered down upon one hundred sprawled bodies in Cultural Center of the Philippines. The bodies belonged to the volunteer performers of *Cassettes 100*, which had just been performed in the CCP lobby for the very first time since the original in 1971. [fig. 5.3] After a few seconds of near silence—a long pause after the last strains of *Cassettes 100* concluded over the handheld MP3 players—applause reverberated through the space. The once motionless bodies quickly reanimated as students, artists, members of Maceda’s family, and others sprung up and threw about the newspapers in celebration. As the penultimate performance of *Maceda 100*, a symposium filled with talks, performances and an art exhibition dedicated to Maceda’s centennial birthdate, *Cassettes 100*’s return to the CCP served as a triumphant climax to the festivities.

In the week leading up to the symposium, I had been told that *Cassettes 100* would include a surprise ending to reflect the current political climate in the Philippines under President Rodrigo Duterte, who had assumed office in 2016. Duterte was feared among artists for his hardline stance on drugs and endorsement of vigilante justice against drug dealers and users. The organizers wanted the new ending to update *Cassettes 100* to reflect what they believed to be Maceda’s original intention of disguised dissent under the Marcoses.⁵⁸⁹ That ending was not the only thing that differentiated the new staging of *Cassettes 100* from its original 1971. Many of its initial premises were the same: the source of sound came from one hundred recordings made by

⁵⁸⁹ I heard through the grapevine that the artistic director, Jonas Baes, stated that Maceda wanted to use toilet paper in the original *Cassettes 100* design because the CCP was “shit.”

Maceda (which are preserved at the U.P. Center of Ethnomusicology Library and Archives in both cassette and mp3 format), the sound apparatuses were carried by amateur volunteers, the performance would take place in the lobby and the winding corridors of the CCP, and the volunteers followed specific instructions to move about the space in a particular way. With artistic direction from Jonas Baes and set design by Junyee, however, much of this new *Cassettes 100* production strayed away from the original performance.

First of all, no one had to bring their own cassette players. In fact, there were no cassette players in the restaging of *Cassettes 100*. Instead, each volunteer was outfitted with identical red or black MP3 players that had been pre-loaded with Maceda's original recordings. Second of all, while the original performance consisted of a set that included streamers, toilet paper, and other cheap detritus affixed to the CCP's interior surfaces, the new *Cassettes 100* lacked those unseemly adornments. Instead, fastened to each MP3 player were long strands of organic materials that resembled oversized antennas designed by Junyee. While *Cassettes 100* required the volunteers to wear black in 1971, those who participated in the new *Cassettes 100* had black shirts with various white Xs and checkerboards. And finally, unlike in the original iteration of *Cassettes 100*, the lights were kept on the whole time.

The matching MP3 players and black t-shirts created a uniformity that separated the audience from the volunteer performers—a distinction that was not true in the 1971 version. The lack of flashing lights or paper streamers also prevented the kind of concealment that had taken place in 1971. The opening speech by made by Dr. Verne de la Pena also made no extension of an invitation for audience members to freely mingle with the performers. **[fig. 5.4]** In fact, a separate seating area, seen behind perfect ordered circles of people, had been reserved for National Artists and speakers of the symposium, which added another hierarchical division in the

new staging of *Cassettes 100*. [fig. 5.5] In the entire performance, not one audience member dared to enter the so-called performance space in the center of the CCP lobby. There was also perpetual recording in both video and photograph form by the CCP and the Center for Ethnomusicology; the two had collaborated for the Maceda centennial festivities. In the age of social media, almost everybody seemed to be watching *Cassettes 100* through the screen of their cell phones as they also photographed and video recorded the event from the sidelines. One enterprising volunteer performer attached a Go-Pro to his head. [fig. 5.6] Media coverage of *Cassettes 100* fawned over the presence of John Lloyd Cruz, one of the most famous actors in the Philippines, who has a strong presence in the contemporary art scene in Manila.

I was unimpressed. The volunteer participants marched slowly through the CCP like choreographed zombies who were afraid of a misstep. The whole thing was too precise, not nearly as lawless as the photographs and written documentation had suggested of *Cassettes 100*. Even Yolanda Laudico remarked that this iteration was far too clean, much less chaotic than the original. Yet, at the end, in an attempt to recreate the clutter and confusion present at the original *Cassettes 100*, newspapers rained down on the listless volunteer performers as they laid perfectly still.

As the performance concluded, I raced up the stairways of the CCP to look down on the mess from the top floor balcony. [fig. 5.7] I wanted to capture something like Gutierrez's final photographs that flattened paper, people, and chandelier into a single, aestheticized register. As I took some snapshots, I noticed people quickly sweeping up the mass of newspapers. What a shame, I thought. The tolerance for mess or chaos in the CCP seems to have diminished since the 1970s. I take a few more photos before I leave. Looking back at my photographs from that evening, I realized that one of the piles of newspapers had eyes! Someone had buried their body

in the newspaper after it had been contained in a pile as a joke. His friends circle around the pile and take pictures of him.

A few days later, I asked friend about *Cassettes 100*'s surprise ending. What was the point of all those newspapers? Was that the surprise ending? Apparently, due to Duterte's approval of vigilante justice, a number of dead bodies have turned up. These bodies are often covered in newspapers or have pieces of paper near them that declare that them as drug users or dealers to justify their murder. Covering the fallen bodies of the performers with newspapers was a way of not only memorializing these people, but subtly protesting Duterte's administration and its hard stance on drugs.

I asked, "Are these bodies with newspapers common knowledge? Is this something that a local audience at *Cassettes 100* would have recognized? That it was a form of protest? Because I didn't know."

"Yes. People from here would have known."⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁹⁰ This dialogue is paraphrased from memory. I have also chosen to keep references anonymous in this epilogue as these events are still taking place in the Philippines.

FIGURES

See separate attachment.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Lahi Gallery Letter and Contract

Lahi Gallery Letter to Roberto Chabet

Mr. Roberto Chabet Rodriguez
101 Lake St.
San Juan, Rizal

Dear Mr. Rodriguez,

In view of the opinion of the Board Of Directors of the Lipas at Bagong Kalinangan ng Lahi Association, we would like to make you and your group of exhibiting artists aware of the following facts related to your exhibit which has influenced the terms of the contract. It is their unanimous view that:

- 1) The exhibit is not money earning and therefore we shall be incurring only losses during its duration. (eg. electricity, allowance of receptionist and other expenses of maintenance.)
- 2) Our receptionist is threatening to resign because of the ill-treatment she has received from your group and which she believes will only continue.
- 3) That we cannot use the premises at all for other purposes of the Association. (Including not being able to use the air conditioner and the refrigerator.)
- 4) That all other sources of our income, e.g. the sale of other consigned art works, the cafe and theater are frozen because of the exhibit and if this is extended the very existence of the Association is threatened.

Enclosed is the Contract. We would appreciate if you could bring it and give your answer tomorrow evening at 7. pm. If the terms are not agreeable to you, then we would kindly request your group to take down the exhibit on the following day, during office hours. After that date the Association cannot be responsible for them.

We hope, however, that you understand our reasons.

Yours Sincerely,

Board of Directors
Lipas at Bagong Kalinangan ng Lahi Ass. Inc.

Managing Staff

Wilhelmina Demegillo
Head of Performing Arts

George Reyes
Business Manager

Carina David
Public Relations

Franco Patriarca

Cota Yabut

Loretta Lichauco

Alejandro Roces

Jose Asuncion

Lahi Gallery Agreement of Exhibit (enclosed with letter)

AGREEMENT OF EXHIBIT

This is to certify that _____, representative for the group of exhibiting artists, of legal age, recipient _____, and Lipas at Bagong Kalinangan ng Lahi Association Inc. a non-profit entity, agree that:

- 1) The following artists: _____
_____ shall exhibit their art works at Lipas at Bagong Kalinangan ng Lahi Gallery-café-theater.
- 2) Lipas ant Bagong Kalinangan ng Lahi shall provide for the place excluding the kitchen and stockroom and including the lighting for the said exhibit.
- 3) The Exhibit shall be held from April 19 to April 27, 1984.
- 4) Any change of the existing set-up, renovation or removal of any part of the gallery and the restoration of the said changes shall be the responsibility of the exhibiting artists. In restorations, however, the question of whether the artists shall restore the same set-up or not shall be subject to negotiations between the two parties.
- 5) The gallery part shall be open to the public Tuesdays to Sundays from 10 Am to 12 noon and from 2Pm to 7Pm.
- 6) Lipas at Bagong Kalinangan ng Lahi shall collect 25% commission on whatever sales are made with a minimum of P500.00 sales. However if no sales are made, that covers the minimum, the exhibiting artists shall pay P20.00 per day for maintenance during the duration of the exhibit.
- 7) The exhibiting artists shall be liable for any moral damage caused by the exhibit.
- 8) The [BLANK/ERASED]

We hereby sign this agreement and bind ourselves to its terms on this day the _____ of this month of _____, 1974.

Exhibiting artists Representative

Kalinangan ng Lahi Representative

witness

witness

APPENDIX B

Manifesto for Indigenous Art, by Luis “Junyee” Yee, Jr. and Virgilio “Pandy” Aviado

Manifesto

By Junyee and Pandy Aviado

In this day and age and for many ages now
the global art activities, dissemination, and funding
have been controlled and sustained
by a few rich and powerful countries
and unquestioningly accepted by the global art community
as the one and true art form

On the other hand, indigenous art traditions
that are rich and have existed long before this new imposition ,
are relegated to a minor role and in my many countries, their sources of supply
therefore, we, indigenous artists
from developing and underdeveloped countries,
declare and affix our names in this manifesto,
the 24th of November 1991, Havana, Cuba.

We form a fraternity dedicated not only to revive
and sustain indigenous art forms and activities,
but to establish a new global art form
that will give parity to all artists,
thus having an interconnected validity.

We call on all artists from developing and underdeveloped countries
to join in this struggle in order to overcome this imbalance
and to persevere until this dream turns to reality.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

To be Added