

onor for his performance as a snake, employing visual elements from each province in New Guinea. Numerous PNG artists participated in a "Spirit of the People: New Melanesian Art" (8/17-9/27) in August at the Corbans Art Estate in Auckland, and a scaled-down version of the "Luk Save" exhibition, was held at Auckland's Esthete Gallery (7/19-8/10).

The big news of international note was **"Ailans to Ailans,"** a massive collaborative program of contemporary PNG art produced by the Christensen Fund in cooperation with the University of Goroka. Curated by academic Pamela Rosi and artist Michael Mel, the exhibition made stops at London's Rebecca Hossack Gallery (9/16-10/17) and the PNG-focused Alcheringa Gallery in Victoria, Canada (11/5-26), and included two nights of lectures by Michael Mel at the de Young Museum (10/29-30), San Francisco.

The **de Young Museum** was in the news in April as it was nearly forced to sell 76 items from its large collection of New Guinean artifacts as part of an effort to settle an inheritance dispute brought on by heirs of the Annenberg family, donors of the museum's comprehensive Polika Collection of New Guinean art. In July, a California judge overturned a previous ruling keeping the items in San Francisco for now.

On a happier note, London dealer Rebecca Hossack recovered a lost painting. In February, the UK's Royal Mail sold a canvas by the late PNG painter Mathias Kauage—worth tens of thousands of dollars—at a lost-mail auction. The honest buyer, who purchased the work for only USD 40, returned the painting to Hossack when he found her address clearly written on the back. **By Dyer Cushman**



AIPEL KA, *Six to Six Shield*, 1990-95, wood, paint, rattan, 148 x 47 x 12 cm. Courtesy National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

PHILIPPINES

Acknowledgments: Ringo Bunoan, Yael A. Buencamino, Karla P. Delgado, Trickie C. Lopa

OFFICIAL COUNTRY NAME
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

LANGUAGES
TAGALOG, ENGLISH

POPULATION
97,976,603

MEDIAN AGE
22.5

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT PER CAPITA
US \$3,300

Source: CIA World Factbook



TOTAL VALUE OF ART EXPORTED
(UN Comtrade Database 2008)
US \$1,784,307

ARTS FUNDING
(National Commission For Culture and Arts)
US \$6,688,475

ART PROGRAMS
(UNIVERSITY LEVEL)
5

STUDENTS ENROLLED
N/A

Source: Compiled by AAP (non-official)

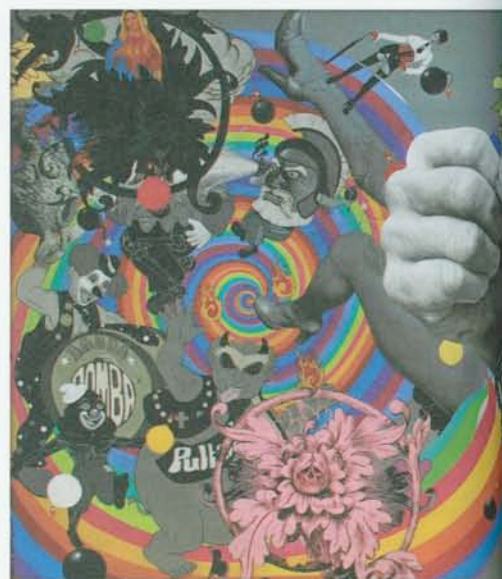
MUSEUMS EXHIBITING
CONTEMPORARY ART
10

CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERIES
(COMMERCIAL)
11

CONTEMPORARY ART SPACES
(NONPROFIT)
5

ART FOUNDATIONS
(NGO + PRIVATE)
2

Source: Compiled by AAP (non-official)



RONALD VENTURA, *Si Malakas at si Maganda*, 2009, oil on canvas.

The Philippines' vibrant art scene is concentrated in the capital Manila, which enjoys greater freedom of expression

compared to the rest of the country. The primary public institution that support the arts in Manila is the **National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA)** that also oversees the National Endowment Fund for Culture and the Arts, the **Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP)** and the National Museum of the Philippines.

The CCP celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2009 with the expansive exhibition "Suddenly Turning Visible" (2/17-4/23), a selection by National Museum curator Patrick Flores from the center's collection of more than 1,000 modern and contemporary artworks. A group show of the Thirteen Artist Awardees (7/9-8/16), a prize founded in 1970 by the country's foremost conceptual artist-curator Roberto Chabet, included painter, sculptor and fashion designer Patty Eustaquio, as well as installation artist Kawayan de Guia.

At the **National Museum**, New York painter Julian Schnabel had a much-acclaimed exhibit of his recent canvases (6/13-7/6), with a parallel show of prints at the commercial space Manila Contemporary (6/12-7/5). The **Metropolitan Museum of Manila** hosted "Come In: Interior Design as a Contemporary Art Medium in Germany" (6/23-9/15), which included multimedia works by Bea Camacho and Alvin Zafra, two young artists.

The oldest private institution to support modern and contemporary art in the Philippines is the **Lopez Memorial Museum**, which highlighted contemporary work in "Keeping the Faith: Acts of Mediation" (12/3/08-4/4),



182.9 x 365.8 cm. Courtesy Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York.

part of the annual “Zero In: Private Art, Public Lives” project undertaken by a consortium of private museums in Manila. Kiri Dalena’s contribution, an installation of piled wooden chairs entitled *Barricade, Book of Slogans, Erased Slogans and Isolation Room* (2008), incorporated images of the martial law period (1972–81) from the Lopez library. The Lopez also supported a landmark research project in partnership with Hong Kong’s Asia Art Archive (AAA) on Roberto Chabet entitled “The Chabet Archive,” overseen by artist and AAA researcher Ringo Bunoan. The private **Ayala Museum** held numerous shows including “Romulo Olazo: A 40-Year Retrospective” (7/28–9/13) of the modernist Filipino printmaker and painter, as well as new sculptures by Daniel de la Cruz (8/29–9/10) in Artist Space, a commercial gallery within the museum.

Academic institutions in Manila mount ambitious exhibitions. The **Ateneo Art Gallery (AAG)** at Ateneo University is dedicated to modern Filipino art and has a collection of more than 500 pieces. Since 2004, the AAG has given annual Ateneo Art Awards to emerging artists under the age of 35. This year an exhibition of the short-listed artists was held at the Grand Atrium, Shangri-La Plaza Mall (8/7–17) and the AAG (8/26–9/30). Three winners—Leeroy New, Patty Eustaquio and Kiri Dalena—were announced in August.

At the University of the Philippines **Vargas Museum (UPVM)**, Bunoan unveiled her project “Archiving Roberto Chabet” (3/3–4/4), which reconstructed some of the legendary artist’s works. The Panel Collective, a group of young cartoonists including Melvin Calingo, Joanah Tinio-Calingo and Michael David, opened at the UPVM’s Edge Gallery (4/22–7/12).

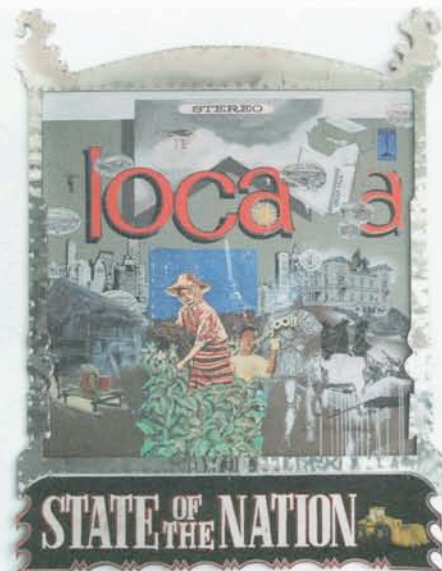
Manila’s expanding gallery scene is consolidating around the Pasong Tamo area in Makati City, particularly with the opening

in December 2008 of **Manila Contemporary**, which is run by regional powerhouse dealer Valentine Willie. Manila Contemporary joined important local galleries Silverlens and Finale in Pasong Tamo and put on several group shows, including “Here Be Dragons: the Topography of Allegory” (8/15–12/5) with Alex Aguilar, Poklong Ananding and Roberto Chabet.

Run by photographer Isa Lorenzo, **Silverlens** and its alternative space Silverlens Lab, or SLab, which launched in 2008, showcases Filipino photography at international fairs, this year showing at New York’s Pulse (3/5–9) and Hong Kong’s Art HK (5/14–17). At the gallery in Manila, Emmanuel Santos showed his dramatic religious-themed scenes (2/12–3/14), and Frankie Callaghan exhibited his night photos of slums in “Dwellings” (9/9–10/03). The Silverlens Foundation gives grants to photographers and maintains an art library. **SLab** presented Mariano Ching’s dream-like cartoons (7/15–8/8) and Cristina Dy’s charcoal drawings (3/26–5/2).

One of Manila’s foremost commercial galleries, **Finale Art File**, started the year with a Juan Alcazaren and Bernardo Pacquing show in their generous new space near Pasong Tamo (1/13–2/7). Finale also showcased two emerging artists later in the year: installation artist Poklong Ananding (10/6–29) and photographer and painter MM Yu (12/8–31).

The **Drawing Room**, established in 1989, also participates regularly in international fairs, including Scope New York (3/5–9), Art HK (5/14–17) and India Art Summit (8/19–22), and presented solo shows in their Makati City gallery, including the vivid paintings of Maya Munoz (8/29–9/18) and Kawayan de Guia’s latest jukebox-inspired installations in “Kata ng Pilipinas – God knows hudas not play” (11/21–12/12), following a residency at Art Omi in



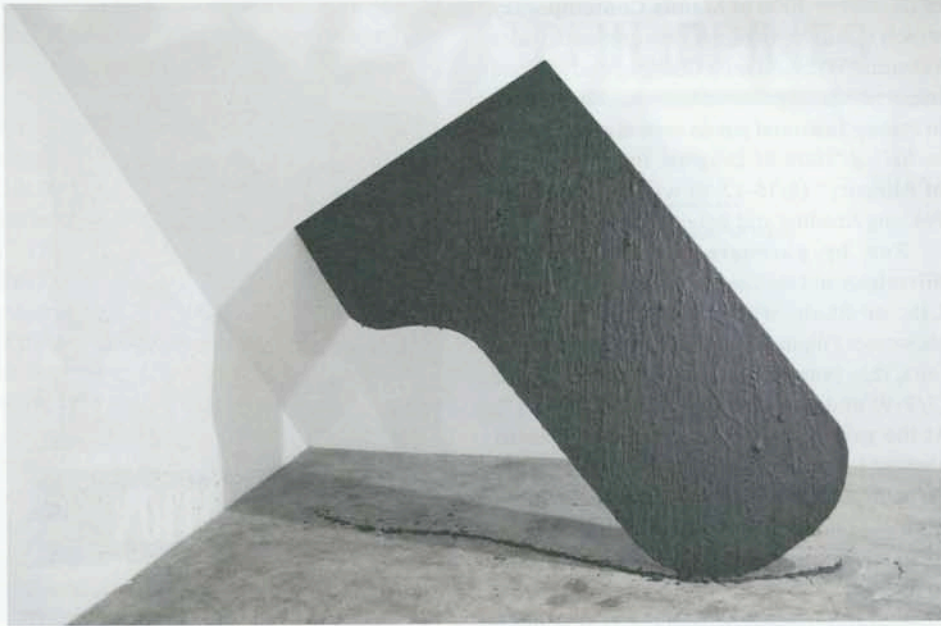
KAWAYAN DE GUIA, *State of the Nation*, 2009, mixed media on digital print on canvas, 191 x 139 cm. Courtesy the Drawing Room, Manila.

upstate New York (6/28–7/20).

The closing of **West Gallery** at the popular shopping center SM Megamall in January marked the end of its time as one of the most publicly accessible spaces for contemporary art in the Philippines. The gallery returned to its original West Avenue location in Quezon City, where it mounted Roberto Chabet’s “Alarm and Chaos” (3/31–4/27), a series of textured monochromes with harmonicas attached to the surface. Chabet’s most notable gallery shows were “10,000 Paintings I Must Paint Before I Die” (4/17–5/7), a playful reflection on modernism with primary-colored canvases attached to clipboards at **Mag:net Gallery** in Manila, and “Waiting in Line to See the Trinity Site” at Paseo Gallery (3/24–4/13). Also at Mag:net, conceptual artist and curator Nilo Ilarde cut into walls for “Cold Cuts” (5/12–6/8),



POKLONG ANANDING, *Mountain Under Knees*, 2008, steel, plate polyurethane paint, video, dimensions variable. Courtesy Finale Art File, Manila.



BERNARDO PACQUING, *Sun of My Soul*, 2008, plywood, undercoating tar, brass tacks, dimensions variable. Installation view at MO_Space, Manila, 2008. Courtesy MO_Space, Manila.

and emerging artist Jayson Oliveria used brash brushstrokes, graffiti and scavenged images for the exhibition "Life Expectancies" (3/7-4/13) in its Quezon City space.

Launched in 2001, the artist-run **MO_Space** operates on the third floor of a retail complex in Fort Bonifacio. The gallery mounted a solo show of Felix Bacolor's "Stormy Weather" (5/23-6/28), an atmospheric installation of more than 800 colorful plastic wind chimes suspended from the ceiling, and "Études for More Than Two Hands" by Bernardo Pacquing and Juan Alcazaren (12/6/08-1/11), a sculptural, sensory riff on the idea of musicality.

Keeping their space in the Marikina Shoe Expo, **Pablo Gallery** opened a second space, Pablo Fort, in February in Fort Bonifacio. Exhibitions included Maria Cruz's gestural abstractions in "Your Daydreams Reveal Something About Your Ethnic Background" (4/17-5/16), while Manuel Ocampo showed new assemblages in "Monuments to the Institutional Critique of Myself" (8/29-9/26).

At **Art Informal**, 25-year-old Costantino Zicarelli exhibited an installation with giant plastic rats, "The Mind Is a Terrible Thing to Taste" (4/16-5/10). **Blanc** gallery, with spaces in Makati City and Mandaluyong, presented movie-inspired works by Leeroy New and Tatong Recheta Torres (8/24-9/10).

It was a year of firsts for new festivals and fairs. Organized by the Bonafide Art Galleries Organization and the NCCA, **Manilart 09** in Taguig City (7/16-19) was the first international art fair hosted in the Philippines, welcoming more than 30 mostly Filipino galleries such as Finale, Silverlens and Manila Contemporary. Shortly after, **Asia-Europe New Media Art Symposium**, a collaboration between the Philippines' SABAW Media Art Kitchen and Multimedia Center KIBLA in Slovenia with

talks, presentations and roundtables, kicked off in Manila (7/21-25).

Controversy erupted in July, when the Filipino art community, including several National Artists (recognized figures given a monthly stipend, insurance benefits and a state funeral) protested a presidential proclamation that awarded the status of National Artist to four candidates who had been nominated through a presidential prerogative rather than the selection committee.

Beyond Manila, art scenes in Baguio, Bacolod City, Davao and Puerto Princesa are gaining momentum, particularly with the much-anticipated February opening of the **BenCab Museum** near Baguio. A showcase for National Artist BenCab (better known as BenCab), the museum also exhibits his collection of Filipino contemporary art. Surrealist painter Charlie Co continues to run Orange Gallery in Bacolod City, exhibiting local talent and organizing happenings.

Filipino artists participated in many overseas exhibitions last year. The Singapore Art Museum hosted two simultaneous shows spanning a century of art: "Thrice Upon a Time: A Century of Story in the Art of the Philippines" (11/6-1/31/10) and "In the Eye of Modernity: Philippine Neo-Realist Masterworks from the Ateneo Art Gallery" (11/6-3/14/10). Also in Singapore, Valentine Willie Fine Art presented painter, puppeteer, animator and former Thirteen Artist Awardee Don M. Salubayba in "The Peculiarity of a Familial Atmosphere" (7/10-8/2). At Osage Singapore, the Philippines' most promising young artists were shown in "Future Manila" (10/24/08-2/6).

Regional biennales featured several Filipino artists. For Indonesia's Jakarta Biennale, Poklong Anading presented *Untitled (Caskets)* (2008), casting mundane objects in transparent

resin, and Yason Banal showed *Untitled/Again (Marienbad/Jakarta)* (2008-09), objects and images from a series of performance works done in Manila, Hong Kong and Singapore (2/6-27). France-based Filipina artist Lani Maestro showed in Japan's Beppu Contemporary Art Festival (4/11-6/14) and at the Sharjah Biennial (3/19-5/16). Australia-based husband-and-wife artists Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan presented an enormous suspended sculpture, *In-flight (Project: Another Country)* (2009), at the Asia-Pacific Triennial (12/5-4/5/10) at Brisbane's Queensland Art Gallery. In Melbourne, Manuel Ocampo debuted conceptual works at Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces (6/26-7/18).

In Europe, at the 2009 Prague Biennale (5/14-7/26) Geraldine Javier displayed her painting of a hunter's trophy room *Odd Sights, Strange Sounds* (2008), and Nona Garcia, who has won numerous awards in the Philippines, presented her realistic oil portraits of subjects' backs. In Milan, the Marella Gallery included Javier, Garcia and Ronald Achacoso in the regional group show "Post-Tsunami Art: South East B(1)ooming" (2/11-4/2), which then traveled to the gallery's Beijing branch (4/25-6/30). Also in Italy, Verso Artecontemporanea held a group show of Filipino artists in Turin that included the Aquilizan's wing-shaped sculptures consisting of used flip-flop slippers (11/4-1/21/10). In the US, Gina Osterloh exhibited her staged photographs at LA's Chung King Project (2/21-3/28). Street-inspired painter Ronald Ventura, whose brand new work *O Boy!* saw fierce bidding at Sotheby's Hong Kong sale in April, also had his New York debut at Tyler Rollins Fine Art (9/17-10/31).

In 2010, the Philippines' art scene looks to be just as busy. Both Ateneo Art Gallery and the Lopez Museum celebrate their 50th anniversaries with commemorative exhibitions and special programs. *By Marlyne Sahakian*



JAYSON OLIVERIA, *Not to Inspire Awe 5*, 2009, oil and digital print on canvas, 152.4 x 121.9 cm. Photo by MM Yu. Courtesy Magnet Art Gallery, Quezon City.