



SEEKING BALANCE

15 Years of CANVAS



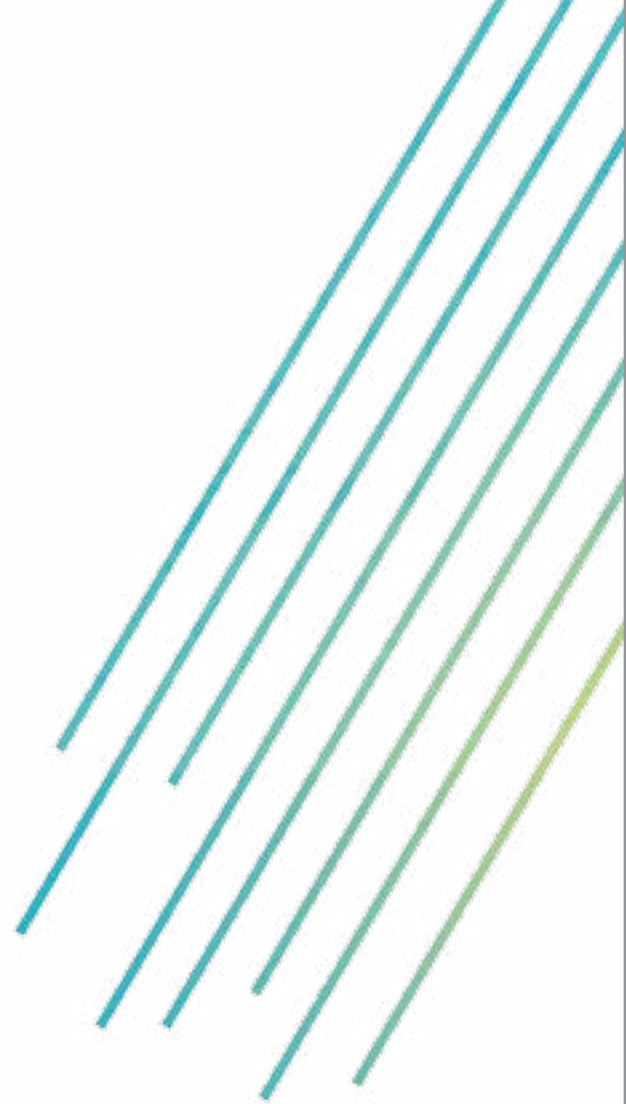
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Fifteen Milestones for Fifteen Years



How does one look back on the past fifteen years?

Fifteen years is a short time. Memories can seem like they were created only yesterday. Fifteen years is short enough to remind us of our humble beginnings, and to know and be thankful for and to all the people and organizations who have made this continuing journey possible.

Fifteen years is also a long time. It is long enough to find visions worth pursuing, to create meaningful work, and to build a family to be proud of. It is time enough to climb a little bit higher, and see a little bit farther.

This list of our top fifteen projects, presented in no particular order, are some of the projects and events for which we are most proud and grateful.

They gave us lessons, and revealed doors through which we have passed, creating other opportunities that we have since taken. They introduced us to people and organizations who have since become mentors, supporters and partners.

These projects remind us that we are where we are not just because of what we did on our own, but even more so, what we were able to accomplish precisely because we stood with others who have enriched us in ways both tangible and intangible.

These milestones helped to define who we are today, and what our visions for the future might be.

Gigo Alampay
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CANVAS





Elias and His Trees

Adapted from Jean Giono's classic ecofable, *The Man Who Planted Trees*, the story celebrates the power of an individual to make a difference. It reminds us that the most important and meaningful contributions require sincere generosity and take time to bear fruit. It reaffirms the possibilities that can come from a relentless selflessness and a genuine commitment to a vision of a better world.

Beyond the plot, the story worth remembering that Jean Giono gave the work itself to the world for free. It has been translated in a multitude of languages, turned into an Academy Award-winning animated movie, and adapted for stage and puppets and spoken word recordings. The story has been an unqualified success, seen and beloved by millions.

And yet, Giono never earned a single cent from it. The free sharing of the story gave it its power.

The goal, he said, has always been "to make trees likeable, or more specifically, make planting trees likeable." In a sense, it mirrors CANVAS' own mission. Our goal is not only "to teach children to read, but to teach children to love books."

The Man Who Planted Trees, and now its offspring, *Elias and His Trees*, are probably the perfect metaphors for what CANVAS strives to be.

The Romeo Forbes Children's Story Writing Competition

In 2006, we launched the Romeo Forbes Children's Story Writing Competition.

The Competition is, as far as we know, the only one of its kind anywhere on the planet. It begins with an artwork that goes on to inspire, on average, more than a hundred writers, leading to a new series of original artworks that ultimately brings a fully illustrated storybook for children to life. It remains our flagship and signature activity.

Twenty seven winners have so far emerged from the thousands of submissions that we have received to date. Nineteen of the winning stories have already been published, and the rest are in the pipeline. With a line of young artists committed in the coming years, we are very excited to see what other picture books emerge to inspire children as we move forward into the future.



One Million Books for One Million Filipino Children

To date, we have given away more than three hundred thousand copies of our books to children in disadvantaged communities and public schools all over and in all corners of the country. With the help of like-minded individuals and partners of all colors and persuasions — from students going on fieldwork to doctors holding charitable clinics, to military personnel travelling by foot to missionary areas, to leftist organizations providing assistance to Lumad refugees, and many more — our books have reached the northernmost inhabited island of Batanes to the far reaches of Tawi-Tawi, and countless towns, schools, and homes in between.

For many of the children, our books are the very first they get to call their own.

In these divisive times, we have found that everyone can rally and unite behind art, reading, and children.

We are still a long way from our one-million-book target. Fortunately, we have found that the journey itself, is cause enough for celebration.



Nadia and the Blue Stars



One of our most important books was *Nadia and the Blue Stars* by Francesca Nicole Torres, with artworks by Liv Vinluan.

This book is about a little girl who was forced to flee her village when war broke out and how she was able to eventually return. By quiet and persistent action, she was able to help heal the broken land. It reaffirmed that anyone, even a child, can make a difference.

Nadia was published in 2012, right before conflict erupted between the military and Muslim separatists in Zamboanga, forcing tens of thousands of families to flee their homes. So, we asked professors from the Psychology Department of Ateneo de Manila University to create modules that would enable the use of *Nadia and the Blue Stars* in helping children in evacuation centers deal with the trauma of displacement.

We then sent thousands of copies of the book and teaching modules to evacuation centers in Mindanao, and a local NGO — Project Banig Zamboanga — trained parents and teachers to use the book.



The book and modules were also later used to help children displaced by other natural calamities such as Typhoon Haiyan.

In 2019, *Nadia and the Blue Stars* was turned into yet another musical at the Cultural Center of the Philippines by another nonprofit, Black Canvas (no relation to CANVAS), as part of the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

From a painting to a story to a book to a tool for psychosocial therapy to two musicals, all benefiting tens of thousands of children, *Nadia and the Blue Stars* best exemplified what we've always said was the ripple effect of art and stories.



Pacific Rim Park

In 2009, we built a small park in Puerto Princesa City in Palawan.

CANVAS was contacted by the San Diego-based Pacific Rim Park Project, a nonprofit organization that creates friendship parks around the Pacific Rim as a means of fostering understanding and goodwill. The Pacific Rim Park Project serves as a way to bridge cultures, establish new connections, and help define what it means for citizens and countries to be members of the emergent Pacific Rim community.

Think of it as a “Survivor-Meets-Habitat-for-Humanity” project. The parks are designed and built by architecture students under the artistic supervision of leading artists, architects, and urban planners. The students come from several countries, and transcend their language and

cultural differences through a shared vision to design and build a park... all in 30 days!

Thirty students from South Korea, China, the Philippines, the United States and Russia spent thirty days together in May 2009 to build the Salinlahi Pacific Rim Friendship Park. Set on a spectacular piece of land donated by the City of Puerto Princesa, the park overlooks the portion of the West Philippine Sea where dolphins are frequently seen.

The park was officially inaugurated by Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn on May 31, 2009 and is the fifth of what is now a string of seven parks around the Pacific Rim. Sister parks are located in Russia, Mexico, China, the United States, and South Korea.

Karapat-Dapat

The White Ravens List is an annual catalogue of book recommendations in the field of international children’s and youth literature, put together by the International Youth Library. The list is published just prior to the Frankfurt Book Fair, the world’s largest trade fair for books.

The selections are made by the language specialists of the International Youth Library with the assistance of children’s book experts from all over the world. The books are selected for the list on the basis of the universal relevance of the topics, their literary and pictorial qualities, or their innovative approaches or design.

In 2020, “*Karapat dapat: Bata, Alamin ang Iyong Mga Karapatan! (Child, Know Your Rights!)*” by May Tobias Papa, and brought to life by the illustrators of Ang Ilustrador ng Kabataan, was included in the list as among the 200 best children’s and young adult’s literature books of 2020 — IN THE WORLD.

Their citation reads, in full:

“The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which served as the inspiration for this book, was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989. In spite of being ratified by the Philippines a year later, the publishers see it as necessary to take a stand and educate Filipino children about their rights at a time where the very value of human rights is questioned. All the convention’s 54 articles are re-written in child-friendly language. Selected passages directly address young readers and are beautifully illustrated by the country’s best book illustrators. Readers find extra pages interleaved that can be coloured in or used as game boards. This book is the fruit of the collaboration between CANVAS, a non profit organization that promotes children’s literacy and runs the One Million Books for One Million Filipino Children campaign to donate books to disadvantaged communities, and 21 members of Ang INK, the Philippines’ children’s book illustrators organization (Age: 6+).”





Art for Development Outdoor Banner Project

The main event of our Art for Development is the Outdoor Banner Project.

Each year since 2009, we invite dozens of artists to express, through their works, their thoughts and impressions on selected themes exploring various facets of the Filipino identity. Participating artists have ranged from fine arts students, to emerging and established artists, and all the way to National Artist Benedicto “BenCab” Cabrera.

In addition to showcasing the original works in prestigious venues such as the Cultural Center of the Philippines and the Vargas Museum, the images are used to produce tarpaulin art banners that are then installed in pedestrian-friendly venues to bring the art closer to the people.

Over the years, the art banners have also been installed at the tree-lined Academic Oval of the University of the Philippines, the mountainsides of the BenCab Museum, the Ayala underpasses in Makati, several malls in Metro Manila and Clark, the Baywalk of Puerto Princesa City in Palawan, Bonifacio Global City, and even at the Philippine Embassy in Singapore.

The event is our way of bringing artworks — and issues — closer to the public. Tens of thousands of people see this outdoor art gallery that we create each year, making it one of the most visited annual shows anywhere in the country.





TEDxDiliman

From 2011 to 2017, CANVAS helped to put together TEDxDiliman, an annual offshoot of the popular TED Conference.

It also fits with CANVAS' desire to provide a platform that ventilates important issues and perspectives, enabling more genuine empathy towards others, and a deeper understanding of our individual and collective place in the world.

From curating the speakers, to renting the lights and sounds, to occasionally asking artists to design the stage (Leeroy New's work on the 2015 stage was even cited by TED as among the best in the world), we tried to organize the whole event in a manner that helps provide an experience attendees will remember for a long time.

We also paid attention to the smaller details — from the music that plays as attendees file into the venue, to the design of the tickets, to the event kits, to providing well-designed lounges and monitors outside the venue for late or overflow participants, and to the food in between sessions and cocktails that cap TEDxDiliman.

We did our best to get diverse voices — some known, most relatively undiscovered — to speak at TEDxDiliman on various topics like art, climate change, human rights, the value of books, history, public health, technology, dance, music, law and justice, among many others. Past events were also punctuated by memorable performances by world class talents from the likes of Ballet Philippines, musical prodigies from Casa San Miguel and the Philippine High School for the Arts, Noel Cabangon, Lisa Macuja, The Dawn, Juan Miguel Severo, Gloc-9, Joey Ayala, the UP Concert Chorus, and the Philippine Madrigal Singers.

The future of the TEDx franchise, in light of these present times of quarantine and social distancing, is uncertain. But, during our run, TEDxDiliman provided soul-filling ambience and experiences that is difficult to describe — you really had to be there in person to appreciate it.

Rizalpabeto

Nineteenth century Filipino art technique met 21st century technology in *Rizalpabeto* (2011-2012), a unique collaboration between artist Elmer Borlongan and poet Vim Nadera.

In this pioneering project, words related to the life and legacy of National Hero Jose Rizal were assigned to each letter of the Philippine alphabet. Taking off from each word, Nadera composed verses about Rizal — one poem for each letter. Borlongan then used the iconic iPad as his medium to handsketch interpretations of each poem, executing his works as *letras y figuras*, an old tradition of Filipino art where letters are rendered in stylized forms.

In June 2014, CANVAS partnered with the City of Calamba to give away 3,000 copies of *Rizalpabeto* to students in Rizal's hometown.



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Tagadagat

All members of political art collectives such as *Artista ng Bayan* (ABAY), *Salingpusa*, and *Sanggawa* in the late 1980s, Elmer Borlongan, Manny Garibay, and Mark Justiniani, three of the most highly respected and important artists of their generation, reunited to create “Tagadagat,” a large scale mural unveiled at Art Fair Philippines in 2017.

The idea for the collaboration was initiated by CANVAS Executive Director Gigo Alampay. Hosted and commissioned by CANVAS, the planning and conceptualization stages took over a year, even as the mural itself was executed in just five days at Katnig, a farm in Batangas where CANVAS’ art residencies are also held.

The artists’ statement reads:

It bears emphasis. Navigating the unknown waters of the present absolutely requires empathy. We need it now more than ever, because without it, we will never

find the genuine strength and collective confidence to move forward in these troubled and hopeful days.

We all have our individual dreams, fears, aspirations, ambitions, philosophies, religions, beliefs, and egos.

Conflict is inevitable. Friendships are sometimes broken. Competing priorities force difficult choices. And our lives can and will get in the way of our noble pursuits.

But, always, we have to remember. We rise and fall with everyone.

We are all in the same boat.

Lahat tayo, tagadagat.



Tagadagat

Elmer Borlongan, Manny Garibay, and Mark Justiniani

8 x 24 ft, oil on canvas (2017)



The Settlement

Are we unearthing history, or are we burying it?

In this life-size *barong-barong*, Mark Justiniani provided an immersive socio-political experience through lights and mirrors, that also invited viewers to reflect upon issues of power, dreams, myths, and visions of a past, present, and future Philippines.

More than 6,000 people — many in line for up to four hours just to enter — visited it during its 10-day run at the University of the Philippines, along with hundreds of thousands of engagements on social media.

Commissioned by CANVAS, “The Settlement” was part of a continuing effort to bring art closer to the public, and the state university, with its deserved reputation as a bastion of intellectual thought, commitment to freedom and human rights, and resistance to historical revisionism, proved to be the perfect venue. The response to the installation also reaffirmed a general hunger for good, meaningful public art.





Clear and Present Danger: 1081

One of our biggest and most important shows to date, *Clear and Present Danger: 1081*, opened at the Main Gallery of the Cultural Center of the Philippines in 2012, the 40th year since the declaration of Martial Law.

Borrowing from individual collectors, as well as from the permanent collections of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the Central Bank, and The Ateneo Art Gallery, the retrospective gathered and featured hundreds of iconic works by some of the most important artists who were active during this pivotal period in our nation's history.

It was a reminder and reassurance that the fight for freedom and human rights can and has been successfully waged. The show was also a tribute to the artists, writers, and singers who kept the dwindling flames of protest alive in the darkest periods of Martial Law. Their works remain in the nation's collective memory and creatively document a horrific past that we must never forget.

Art saved us then. It continues to save us now.

Message in the Sand

Message in the Sand is, for now, our only children's book that was written by a non-Filipino. We had chanced upon international bestselling author Charmaine Aserappa's charming book, *In a Japanese Garden*. We reached out to her to ask if she would consider writing and donating an original environment-related children's story for us, promising nothing more than finding an amazing artist to illustrate her words.

To our happy surprise, she immediately and generously agreed. The result was *Message in the Sand*, a child-

friendly environmental story for whom artist Roel Obemio rendered a sold-out series of his trademark playful paintings.

We have since published and donated tens of thousands of copies of the book. In 2015, the Department of Education approved the use of *Message in the Sand* for elementary English classes and ordered over 4,500 large-sized, read-aloud versions of the book. As a result, this CANVAS tale was read by and benefited over 200,000 students in public schools throughout the Philippines.





Panyaan

In 2016, CANVAS sent a team of writers, photographers, and artists to the island of Palawan to learn about and document the culture of the Tagbanua, one of the oldest indigenous tribes in the Philippines. We partnered with the ECOFISH (Ecosystems Improved for Sustainable Fisheries) Project of USAID and were hosted by three local communities for a week. The CANVAS team listened and probed as elders and leaders of the Tagbanua shared their history, culture, dreams, hopes, and everyday lives.

Panyaan: Three Tales of the Tagbanua was the fruit of this creative process. The three original children's stories that make up this book, while fictional, are all based on the traditions, surroundings, and heritage of

the Tagbanua. The artworks that brought them to life are similarly inspired by the patterns, colors, and feel of the gorgeous islands, waters, and communities of Palawan. Each tale is different, and yet all are rooted in stories that have been handed from generation to generation of proud Tagbanua.

In 2019, CANVAS again worked with the elders to translate and publish mother-tongue versions of *Panyaan*.

The book now serves both as an educational tool for younger generations, as well as an ecotourism boost to create wider awareness and appreciation for their history and way of life.



CANVAS AiR

In 2018, CANVAS launched its annual Artist in Residence Program (CANVAS AiR). Residents are visual artists who share CANVAS' interests in using art to explore contemporary social issues, particularly children's literacy, national identity, free expression and other human rights, and the environment.

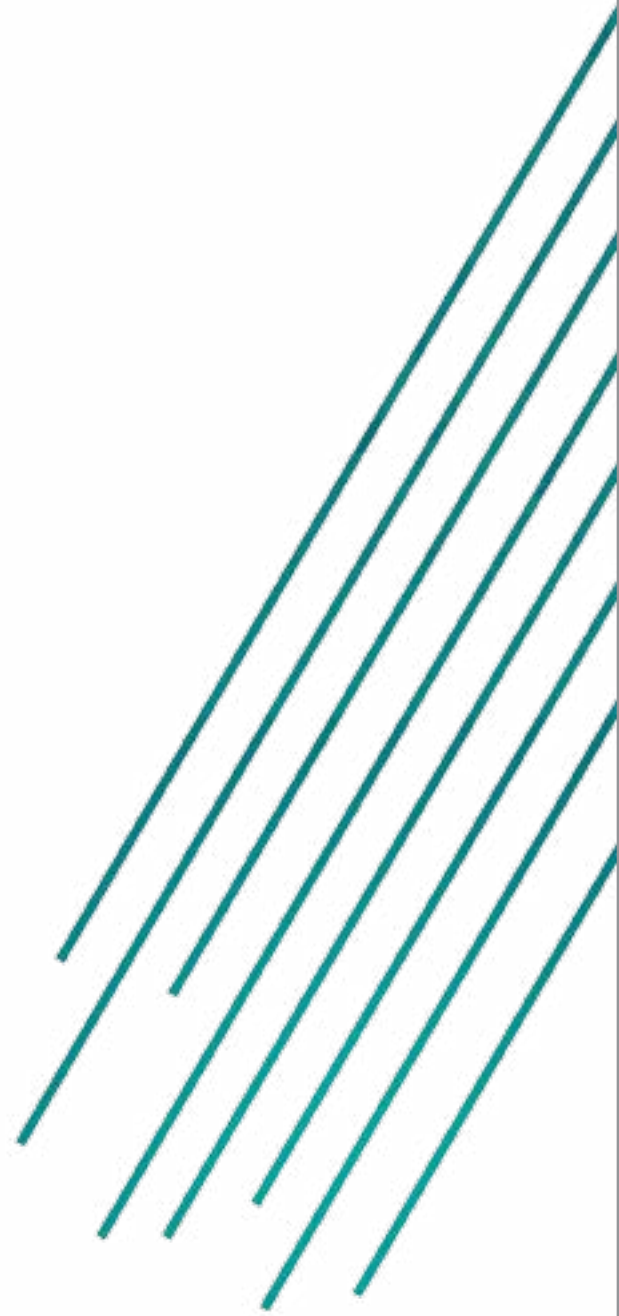
Residents are provided with free board and lodging, a modest grant for supplies, and precious time and space for disciplined work, reflection, and interaction, uninterrupted by the distractions of daily life and obligations.

CANVAS AiR is held in Katnig, a rustic two-hectare farm in Ibaan, Batangas, just beside the site of our planned children's museum. Lined with decades-old mango trees, gentle paths, a small creek, and a collection of bonsai trees, Katnig is a sanctuary that stimulates thought, reflection, and imagination.





For Equilibrium



Our Present Challenge and Goal

We could be individuals simply living life, or organizations or corporations striving to achieve collective goals, or a nation trying to rally behind some shared vision. Finding balance is our continuing challenge, requiring us to confront endless questions with ever shifting answers.

How can I make a difference?

*How will I provide for my loved ones
and stay true to my principles?*

*How can we, despite conflicting beliefs and opinions,
unite behind common goals?*

How do we hold the rich and powerful accountable?

How do we empower the poor and marginalized?

For our 15th Anniversary Exhibition, we invited artists and art collectives to reflect on these questions, and challenged them to explore the dualities that define the balance we seek.

Passion vs. apathy

Science vs. religion

Tradition vs. change

Societal interests vs. individual rights

Conversation vs. debate

Principle vs. practicality

Right vs. wrong (who's to say?)

We asked for large scale works to amplify the power of the images, and to enable their viewing from a distance. It is our hope that these artworks will help to reveal the bigger picture, and empower everyone to imagine and believe that solid footing can be found even in a world and future that are suddenly more uncertain as ever.





Polycephaly

Chad Montero

oil on canvas

The progress of the Filipino people is often compared to a turtle's, very slow and laden with load. Its troubles amplified by internal political divide, the Filipino people are once more stranded, at the mercy of opposing forces. As these two superpowers go head-to-head on all fronts, the turtle country has now sprouted two heads itself, each pulling in opposite directions. We are a vehicle that cannot maneuver. We are like turtles with two different heads and we do not know who to follow because we do not have our own head.



Equilibrium

Dante Lerma

*acrylic on
canvas*

As experts in various fields race against time to find the solution to this pandemic, we find our world plunged into utter disequilibrium, forcing us all to face tough decisions and enormous challenges in order to keep our balance. Our steadfast faith and unwavering belief in the indomitable human spirit will guide us steadily along our course and tide us through these trying times.



Bayani

Roel Obemio

*acrylic on
canvas*

As our nation grapples with the pandemic, we are taken to task to protect ourselves. In these dark times, we pay tribute to those who continue to serve the Filipino people. They have no superpowers, but with their lab suits and masks, our frontliners are the heroes that shine the brightest.



The Glass Wall

Jun Impas

acrylic on canvas

The 2020 pandemic is causing a greater divide between rich and poor. Every glass wall has a break or entrance. This break in the continuity of the glass is where we can start seeking balance. And we need to see it more often, even look for it ourselves. It is our responsibility to seek balance every day.



After the Rain

Jomike Tejido

acrylic and oil sticks on canvas

After a storm, there is beauty in the ripples, the peeking rainbows, and the plants enjoying the nourishing warmth of the sun. Pulling from today's world situation, the piece offers a ray of hope for good days to come after this rain.



Crossings

Working Animals

(Aiya Balingit, Lawrence Canto, Keb Cerda, Ronson Culibrina, Jayvee David, Dale Erispe, Lui Manaig, John Marin, Pow Marin, Jett Osian, Roy Rosatase, Yani Unsana)

acrylic on canvas

In “Crossings,” we see an intersection between a collaborative work and personal expression. The entire scene depicts people crossing a busy street, moving between opposite directions. Each artist makes a mark with their distinct style in the picture while ensuring the continuity and coherence in a composite work. Though defined by different manners of figuration, the individuals in the resulting composition make their way into a unified moment, woven together by bands and streaks of light that binds their frenetic movement

—Ruel Caasi, Director, The Working Animals





Seeking Balance
 Marcel Antonio
acrylic on canvas

There is no anchor in a world that's constantly changing. Balance is an illusion. There is only the wisdom of heart and mind to say 'yes' at the right things and at the right time, to be cognizant, enlightened, and humbled by our ephemeral and mortal existence.



Robots Don't Cry
 Leonard Aguinaldo
acrylic on canvas

The more attached we are to gadgets, the more detached we get from ourselves. Human intervention and the punishment of war tell us how we will cause our own destruction.

Progress is out of reach and wisdom is the shadow of an old man with a baby in his lap playing with the kill button.

Into the Cloud

Liza Flores

hand cut paper art (diptych)

Children are highly impressionable, curious and unafraid to explore. This curiosity, combined with their lack of experience, can make them wander off to corners of the internet that are inappropriate or unsafe. But with the right tools and information, children can take advantage of all the opportunities that the internet has to offer.

This artwork is part of *Safe Space, a Kid's Guide to Data Privacy* (forthcoming, November 2020), commissioned by Globe Telecom, Inc. with additional support from Google, in support of the information and education efforts of the National Privacy Commission of the Philippines.





Makinig

Studio 1616

(Janardan Balingit, Keb Cerda,
John Marin, Jett Osian,
Roy Rosatase, Yani Unsana,
Erick Villarruz)

acrylic on canvas

“Everyone has the right to
freedom of opinion and
expression; this right includes
freedom to hold opinions without
interference and to seek, receive
and impart information and
ideas through any media and
regardless of frontiers.”

— United Nations, Universal
Declaration of Human Rights

Bahay na ba ‘to?

The Durian Collective

(Manny Garibay, Otto Neri,
Jason Moss, Demet dela Cruz)

acrylic on canvas

Inspired by Jose Rizal's *Bapor Tabo* in *El Filibusterismo*, this is our view of the current state of the nation. Rizal, with his floating book, recognizes that education, or more appropriately our cultural awakening, is our hope and lifesaver. Other elements of our culture are represented in the artwork as well—colonialism, religion, the plight of the farmers, even the symbol of Icabod Bubwit's subtle resistance.

There are many forces and facets at play. There is no balance, but there is a desperate search for one. Without genuine change, we fear the search will be endless.

Ito ang pagtingin namin sa kasalukuyang sitwasyon, na may inspirasyon ng Bapor Tabo ni Jose Rizal sa El Filibusterismo. Kinikilala ni Rizal, at ng kanyang lumulutang na aklat, na ang edukasyon, o di kaya ang kultural na kamalayan, ang ating pag-asa at ang makapagligtas sa atin. Ang ibang elemento ng kultura ay sinisimbolo rin sa piyesa — kolonyalismo, relihiyon, ang ipinaglalaban ng mga magsasaka, maski ang simbolo ng tahimik na pagprotesta ni Icabod Bubwit.

Maraming pwersa at panig ang nagtutuos. Walang balanse, ngunit may malubhang paghahanap nito. Sa kawalan ng tunay na pagbabago, natatakot kaming walang katapusan ang paghahanap ng balanse.





Resilience

Darby Alcosseba

oil on canvas

This is our present. Our world is facing adversity, needs to adapt to this new normal, to stay focused and hopeful to get through. The Philippines is no exception. Staying steadfast is our best option.

Ito ang ating kasalukuyan. Ang mundo ay nasa panahon ng kagipitan at kailangang magpanday ng panibagong normal, maging tutok at may tiwala. Kasama rin rito ang Pilipinas. Ang pagiging matatag ang pinakamainam na paraan.

Man-made North

Don Bryan Bunag

acrylic and thread
on canvas

In a world where human standards are set, one must reflect whether those standards conform with what the soul wants, or if the material world is transforming those ideologies into necessity.

Information is deceiving. We—as human beings searching for our own place in a vast ocean of “musts” and “shoulds”—have to strengthen our ability in weighing rationality and intuition to find ourselves.

Sa mundong ang mga pamantayan para sa tao ay nakatakda na, kailangan nating suriin kung ang mga pamantayang iyon ay tugma sa kung ano ang nais ng kalooban, o kung binabago ng ang materyal na mundo ang mga idolohiyang iyon na maging pangangailangan.

Nakakapanloko ang impormasyon. Kailangan natin — bilang mga taong naghahanap ng ating sariling pwesto sa karagatan ng mga “dapat” — palakasin ang ating kakayahang mangatwiran at pandama upang mahanap ang ating mga sarili.







**One to Sawa,
Bayan ng Kawawa**
Othoniel “Otto” Neri
oil on canvas

The country is filled with richness and beauty, but is governed by crocodiles. They milk and take advantage of our coffers while many a Filipino is entrenched in poverty. We are overwhelmed by debt such that even our grandchildren will have to pay the billions of pesos that we have loaned, only for this money to fill the pockets of a few.

Puno ng yaman at ganda ang bansa, ngunit pinamumunuan ng maraming buwaya. Ginagatasan at pinagsasamantalahan ang ating kabang yaman habang maraming Pilipino ang lugmok sa hirap. Baon tayo sa utang at hanggang mga apo natin ay kailangang magbayad ng bilyun-bilyong hiniram para mapunta lang sa mga bulsa ng iilan.

**Ang
Nawawalang Amo**
Jason Moss
oil on canvas

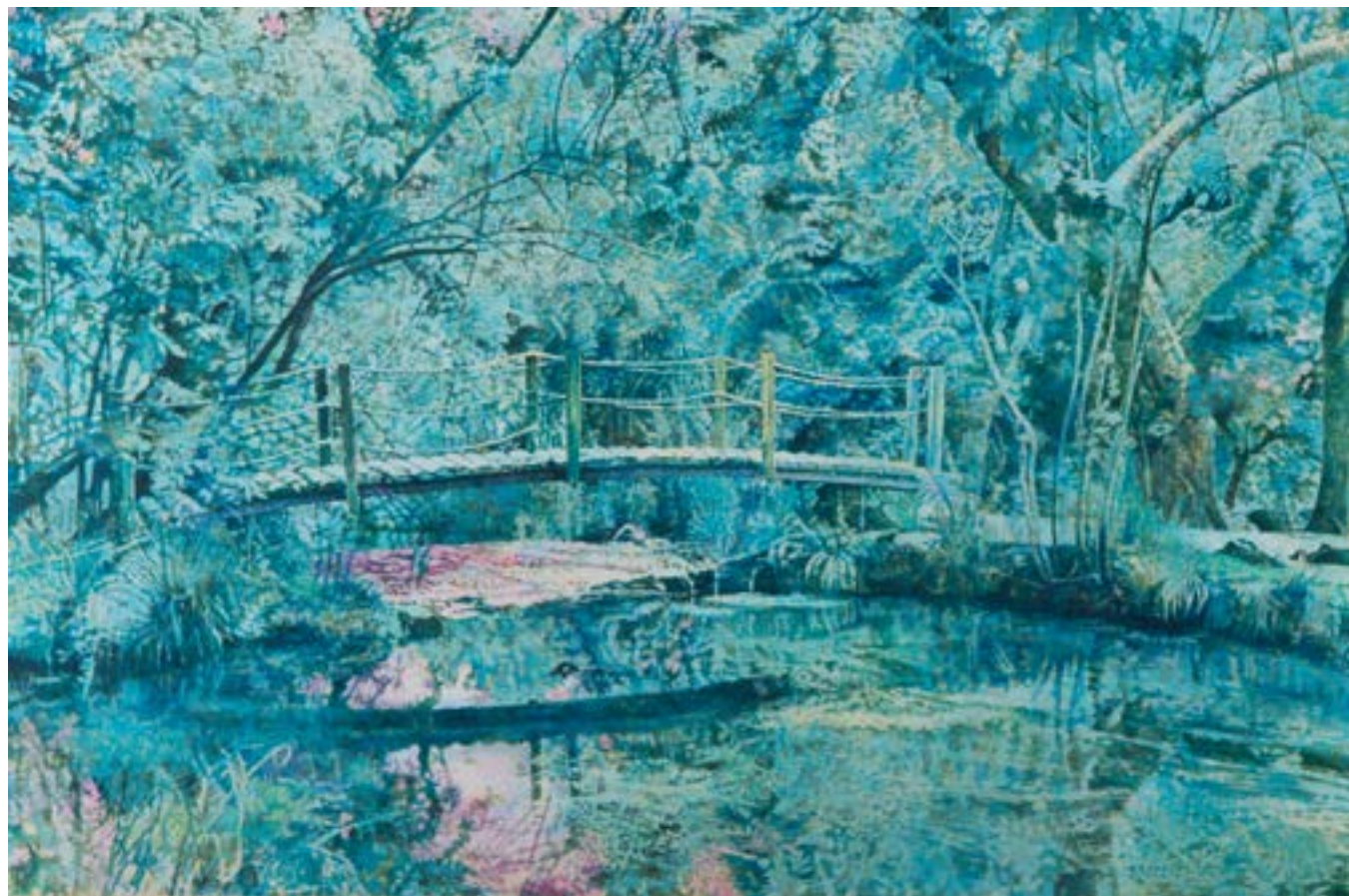
“*Ang Nawawalang Amo*” defines seeking balance as a response to the absence of leadership. The country has literally gone to the dogs.

In anamorphosis in art, an image can be seen when viewed from a particular point. This composition provides quite the opposite and requires us to take a step back and look at the bigger picture; much like how we should view current events in these times as a counter balance.

“Ang Nawawalang Amo” ay tugon sa kawalan ng liderato.

Sa sining, ang anamorphosis ay isang larawan na makikita lamang nang maayos kung nakatayo ka sa isang partikular na punto. Sa komposisyon nitong piyesa, hinihiling na ang manonood ay lumayo nang kaunti upang makita ang buong imahe; tulad ng kung paano natin dapat tingnan ang mga balita sa panahon ngayon, bilang counterbalance.





Over the Pond

Jim Orencio

acrylic on canvas

The bridge over, and reflected in, this pond, calls on us to conserve water and to protect wildlife from losing their habitat to urbanization. The pond brings balance by offering a healthy environment and a breeding place for nature's creatures like insects, frogs, and birds.

Water is life. There is no balance without water.

Hinahamon tayo ng tulay na pangalagaan ang ating mga katubigan at kalikasan na nanganganib dahil sa urbanisasyon. Ang lawa ay nagdadala ng balanse sa pagbibigay niya ng malusog na kapaligiran at ligtas na lugar para makapagparami ang hayop tulad ng mga insekto, palaka, at ibon.

Ang buhay ay tubig. Walang balanse kung walang tubig.



Titulado

Manny Garibay

oil on canvas

We measure ourselves against who we are not. Because we have failed to recognize this hybridization, or maybe even precisely because of it, we are unable to define who we really are, and are unable to move forward.

Tinutukoy natin ang ating sarili batay ang mga katangiang salungat sa atin. Kabaliktaran/gamit ang metrikong hindi atin/banyaga. Dahil hindi natin nakikita ang hybridization, o baka dahil mismo rito, hindi natin matukoy kung sino tayo talaga, at hindi tayo makausad papaharap.



Ang Patuloy na Pag-usad ng Lipunang May Sayad

Sangviaje

(Daniel Aligaen, John Paul Antido,
Edrick Daniel, Dennis Fortozo,
Guerrero Habulan, Joven Mansit,
Jaypee Samson, Pogs Samson)

acrylic on canvas

“God has made man a cosmopolite. He created seas for ships
to glide on, the wind to push them, and the stars to guide them
even in darkest night.”

—Jose Rizal, *Los Viajes*



Journey of Rhythm and Harmony

John Paul Antido

oil on canvas

A couple, Rhythm and
Harmony, try to look for
balance in life, together
they seek their version
of the right fit, proper
circumstances, and
the perfect moment.
Despite the obstacles
they face, they work
hand-in-hand and side-
by-side.





Luksong Tapat

Mark Justiniani

*handsketched digital image,
giclee on archival paper*

This work is part of an upcoming wordless book for children that is also a commentary on the travails of man as he traverses youth to adulthood to old age.

Ang “Luksong Tapat” ay bahagi ng isang aklat-pambata na walang mga salita. Isa rin itong komentaryo tungkol sa paglalakbay ng isang lalaki mula pagkabata hanggang pagkatanda.



Manipestasyon

Cedrick dela Paz

acrylic on canvas
(polyptych)

One's intentions are revealed at moments of crises. Some will seek forgiveness. Some will beg for their needs, just as in a *panata*. Some wolves will mingle with innocent sheep. They will pretend to be God-fearing, though their intentions are anti-people.

Sa gipit na pagkakataon, lalabas ang tunay na intensyon. May lalapit para sa kapatawaran. May kakapit para hingin ang bawat pangangailangan, sa usaping pamamanata. May mga ligaw na lobong hahalo sa purong mga tupa. Magmimistula silang maka-Diyos subalit ang hangarin ay tila hindi makaTao.



Afloat

Renato Barja, Jr.
oil on canvas

I was watching people last summer in one resort and I noticed one individual just floating. It dawned on me that everyone, each person, at one point will just need to float—no matter how tired or heavy his or her burden—in this race called life. I did the painting before the quarantine. I never thought it would connect to our current situation as a nation.

Pinanonood ko ang mga tao sa isang resort noong nakaraang summer at napansin ko ang isang taong lumulutang. Naisip ko darating sa isang punto ng buhay ng bawat tao ang pangangailangang lumutang — gaano pa man siya kapagod o kabigat ang kanyang dinadala. Pininta ko ang piyesa bago mag-quarantine. Hindi ko akalaing magiging salamin ito ng kasalukuyan nating sitwasyon bilang isang bayan.



Ang Paninisi sa Inosenteng Paniki

Jojit Solano

acrylic on canvas

The greed of mankind has led to grave danger, causing natural calamities, global warming, and damage to the environment—affecting all living creatures. With COVID-19, bats are now viewed with even more fear and disgust though they play important roles in our ecosystem, particularly in pest control and pollination. The pandemic forces us to rethink not only our priorities in ethnobiology, but also in epistemology, so that we can put a stop to the ecological mismanagement that ultimately threatens our and other beings' existence.

Phased Out Biskeg

(Ben John Albino, Denmark Dela Cruz,
Boni De Guzman, Rachel Anne Lacaba,
Kinoo Padlan, Frenk Sison, Jojit Solano)

acrylic on canvas

“Phased Out” explores the significance of old concepts that persist today. Issues we inherited from generations before us are often remedied with short-term solutions. Do we wait for the next generation to take care of things? The list is long, and only a select few are resolved. The old fades slowly, but what will replace them emerge even slower. Maybe what has to be phased out are our system and remedies.

Sinisiyasat sa “Phased Out” ang kabuluhan ng mga lumang bagay na umiiral pa rin sa kasalukuyan. Mga isyung panlipunang minana pa natin sa mga naunang henerasyon. Kadalasa’y puro remedyong panandalian lang ang sagot natin sa mga ito. Bahala na lang ba ang susunod na henerasyon? Napakahaba ng listahan at pili lamang ang mga nasusolusyunan. Mabagal ang pagpanaw ng mga luma pero mas mabagal ang pagbangon ng mga kapalit nito. Marahil ang ating sistema at mga remedyo ang nararapat gawing phased out.





**Last Hurrah
Before Lockdown**

Lui Gonzales

*pen and ink on layered
and torn tracing papers*

I usually choose bar scenes as subjects. Little did I know that the pandemic would take a toll on this industry. The two places in this work have closed. Many nights have been oddly quiet. I miss the noise.



1 of 73

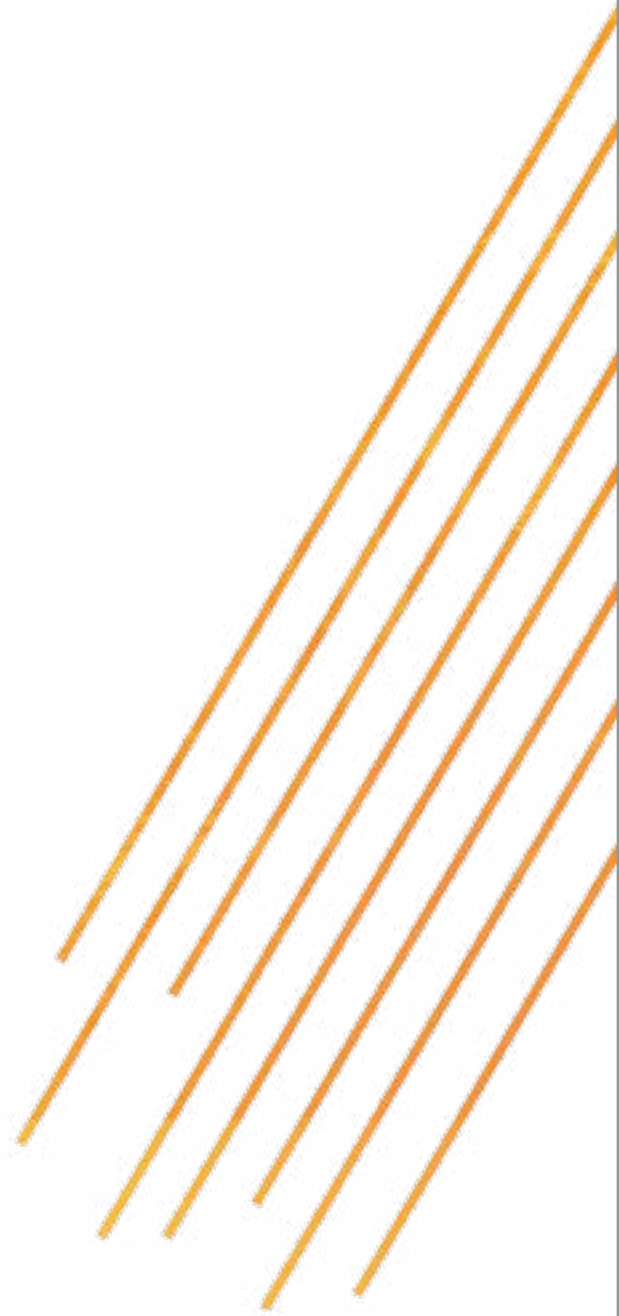
Jaime Pacena II

acrylic on canvas

Inspired by a series of works I began at the start of this pandemic—"Flowers for the Bedside Table" and "The Art of Letting Go," this work is an output of a performative prayer for the children victims of the extrajudicial killings under this administration. There have been 73 as of June 2020. I dedicate my strokes and colors to all those who were killed. I seek eternal peace and justice for them and with them. #stopthekillings #standforhumanrights #forthechildren



In Equilibrium



CANVAS' journey since its birth in 2005 has so far spawned 35 titles, thousands of artworks by hundreds of artists, and hundreds of thousands of books given to children in countless schools, hospitals and communities all over the country.

We are proud of what we've built, and even more so of the team — the CANVAS family — and culture that made all these successes and dreams possible.

And now, fifteen years later, our dreams have grown even bigger, and more complex. We still want to give away a million books, but we also want to measurably demonstrate their impact. We want children to learn to read and to love books, but more than that, we want to provide them with opportunities to grow creatively as well. It is this expanded mission that is driving us to build our Children's Museum of Philippine Art: Tumba-Tumba, as well as to make our books and exhibitions more interactive.

We realize that pursuing these bigger dreams requires us to change, to get out of our comfort zone, and to let go of our present balance. How

we ran CANVAS as a start-up is no longer compatible with our desire and capacity for growth and greater impact.

With maturity as an organization comes the need to institutionalize formal governance systems, and set protocols and procedures. We have to, and are recruiting more people to help us communicate and fundraise. We are committing ourselves to greater transparency and accountability.

These steps are by no means easy. But we need to take them if we are to credibly pursue our goals. We will not allow them to affect our commitment to our principles. But we know that they will change who we are, and how we do what we do.

In this sense then, change is both our challenge and calling.

We seek to both create and adapt to it.

We embrace it because we find our balance in change.





One Million Books for One Million Filipino Children



Reading is an invaluable skill that opens up a multitude of opportunities for the reader — it is a useful tool for communication and self-learning, but also, a door to imagination and joy.

While the Philippines' literacy rate is high, we still have some gaps in functional literacy. While basic literacy means that one can read and understand a simple sentence in any language or dialect, functional literacy is a higher level that includes reading, writing, and numeracy skills.

The One Million Books for One Million Filipino Children Campaign seeks to bridge the gap from basic to functional literacy by donating CANVAS' award-winning books to public schools, hospitals, and disadvantaged communities throughout the country. We hope that by marrying beautiful art

and stories, children will come to love books and reading, and thus set them on a path of life-long learning.

Our books, penned by Filipino authors and the illustrations painted by Filipino artists, often come in parallel translations of Filipino and English. To date, we have donated some 300,000 books to children around the Philippines, from Itbayat in Batanes to Zamboanga.

For some of these children, these books are the first they ever own, and it can be life-changing. They can be the first sparks to imagining themselves as successful individuals in the future, or the first steps towards healing and starting anew.



Help us fulfill our dream. Help us give away
one million books to one million Filipino
children. Be a donor, sponsor, or volunteer!
Or simply spread the word.





Looking For Juan

CANVAS' long-term sustainability will depend on its ability not only to attract donations and sponsorships, but also to create opportunities for self-generated revenues.

Looking for Juan is an online store set up by the people behind CANVAS to complement the mission of promoting greater public appreciation for Philippine art and culture, and to support CANVAS' One Million Books for One Million Filipino Children Campaign.

Launched in 2019, the store is home to CANVAS-published books and the brand's own line of art-infused merchandise. *Looking for Juan* works with the creative community to design and produce premium gifts and everyday items that incorporate artworks from CANVAS' shows, events and books.

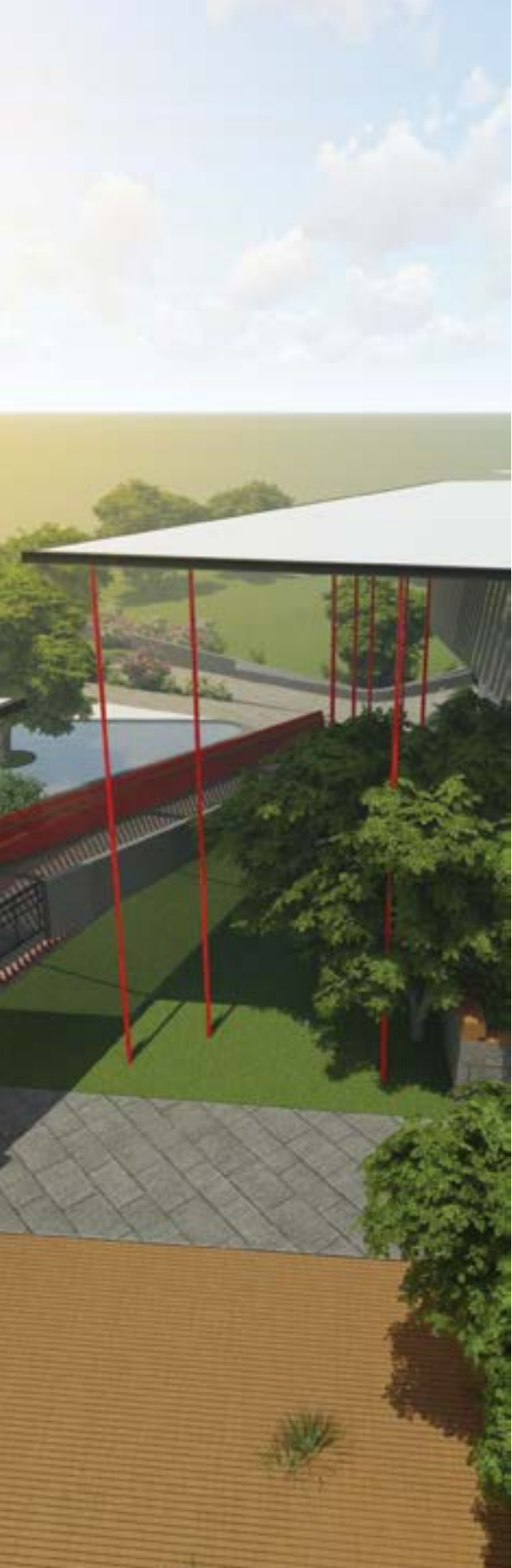
Looking for Juan also adds a creative dimension to the corporate gifting industry by partnering with companies, organizations, and professionals to develop artful gifts that are consistent with their own missions and goals. Finally, *Looking for Juan* works with other non-profit organizations and social enterprises to support their advocacies, develop products, and raise funds together.

At *Looking for Juan*, every item purchased gives back. Every book purchase is matched with two book donations to children in underprivileged communities. And all other purchases similarly support CANVAS' children's literacy initiatives, while also providing participating artists with additional earnings through royalties for the use of their images.





tumba
tumba
children's museum
of philippine art



The Tumba- Tumba Museum of Philippine Art



Situated in a 15,000-square-meter piece of rolling Batangas land lined with mango trees, Tumba-Tumba will be a creative space for Philippine art, and will comprise of the Children's Museum of Philippine Art and CANVAS' Artist in Residence (AiR) facilities.

It is designed to inspire and to trigger imagination. Both for visitors of the Museum and its surrounding gardens, and for resident artists, it will evoke the sense that there is no beginning, and no end — only exploration and wonder.

The Museum will be anchored by CANVAS' permanent art collection.

Exhibitions will be carefully curated to be memorable and interactive, engaging children of all ages to see art as vehicles for storytelling, understanding history, exploring contemporary social issues, as well as helping more mature visitors to reconnect with their younger, more carefree selves.



This is Our Museum

Books and art create wonder and magic. They open children's minds to possibilities. Children will find books and art everywhere in and around our museum.

Our museum will provide spaces that inspire, feel safe, and create memories that children will cherish. One day they will look back and remember, and they will want to bring their own children here.

Our museum will give children experiences that allow them to take risks and understand that mistakes are not failures. They will learn that success is earned.

Our museum will let children do all the things that children do better than anyone else.

Play with abandon

Trust completely

Sleep through anything

Forgive and forget

Learn like a sponge

Imagine without boundaries

Explore without fear

Love unconditionally

We will never underestimate a child.

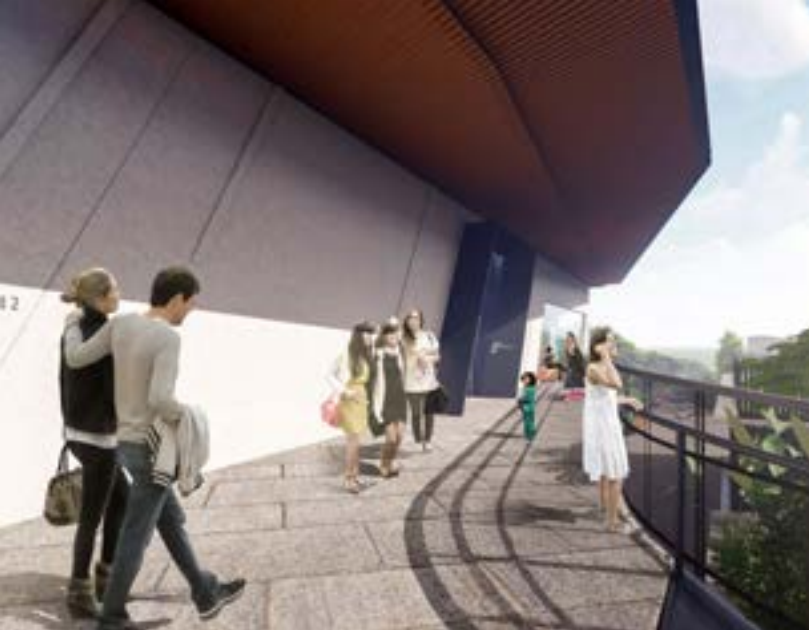
We will never give up hope in a child.

We will let children be.

Because we know that any child can change the world.









Acknowledgments

Numerous people are part of the story of CANVAS.

Needless to say, all the artists and writers who collaborated to give birth to our children's books, and who participated in all the events and exhibitions that we have been privileged to organize these past fifteen 15 years have been central to our story and achievements.

Funding and other support given by a number of institutions were also critical. Grants from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, GlobalGiving, the Prince Claus Fund, and numerous local corporations funded the publication of tens of thousands of books that we have given away.

In particular, we are most grateful to Hans Schoepflin and the California-based Panta Rhea Foundation who have been with us from the very start. They have been a consistent and life-giving presence, awarding CANVAS with annual unrestricted grants that continue to give us confidence and reassurance. They gave us the freedom to explore new projects and ways of doing things — sometimes with little or no success, but often opening doors that would lead to exciting initiatives. The result has been to infuse CANVAS with a culture of creative freedom and risk-taking that empowers us to think more out-of-the-box than we otherwise could have.

There are many other individuals who have joined us at our various events over the past 15 years, including our story competition judges,

TEDxDiliman speakers, performers, volunteers and partners, individual collectors, corporate supporters, the good folks of the University of the Philippines, the UP School of Economics, Patrick Flores and the Vargas Museum, the Cultural Center of the Philippines and Ayala Museum, the Binibining Pilipinas Charities, the BenCab Art Foundation, Mike Cheung, and Oscar Alvarez, and many more... They are too numerous to mention, but you know who you are and please know that we are grateful.

Finally, while I embrace and am proud to be recognized as the founder of CANVAS, I want to emphasize that CANVAS has always been a group effort. A few of them have moved on to other dreams and challenges, but they will always be family: Daniel Tayona, Delan Robillos, Clarice Placido-Dumlao, Annette Ferrer, Larissa Chavez, Kez Evangelista, Jaime Pacena II, Sarah Isabelle Torres, Angel Maraña, Jelo Maraña, Noreen Sapalo, Kevin Candelaria, Earl Agulto, Bryan Adawag, Junica Madrid, Jhunessa Ignacio, Erika Tiu, Ky Dela Torre, Ergoe Tinio, Monica Antonio, Alyssa Peleo-Alampay, Jae Robillos, Elmer Borlongan, Plet Bolipata, Max Ventura, Melvin Mangada, Rachel Follosco and Liza Flores. Absolutely nothing would have happened for CANVAS, without their presence, participation, and collective guidance.

So again, thank you, everyone. And welcome aboard. We're off to pursue bigger dreams.

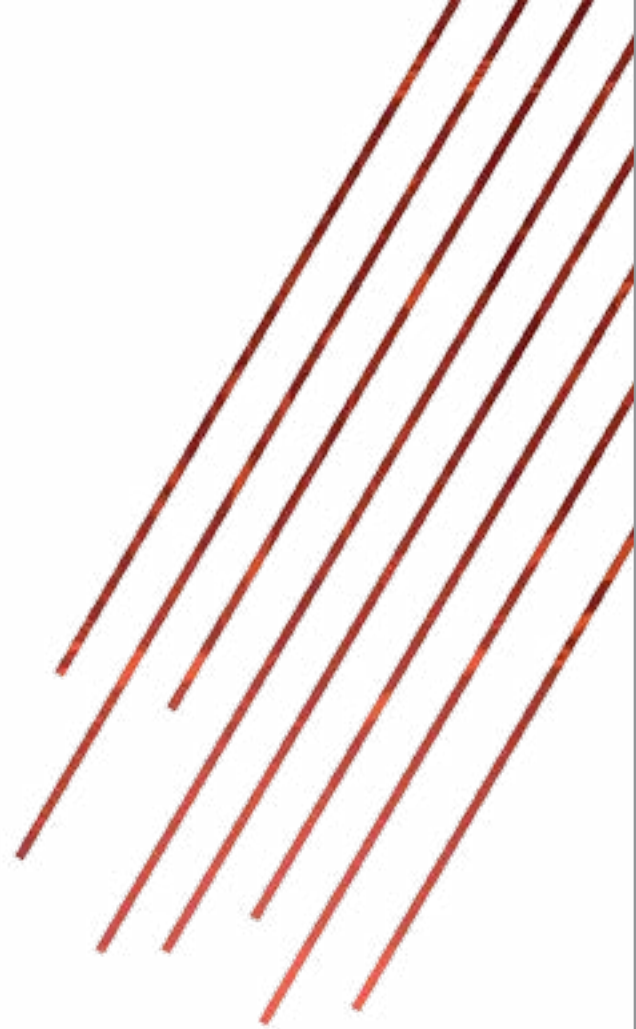
Gigo Alampay
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CANVAS





A Storyteller by Design:

Daniel Palma Tayona
(1968 – 2020)



Daniel, or Dan to us, was CANVAS' founding creative director. You will see his hand in nearly each of CANVAS' children's books from our very first one, *Elias and His Trees* to our latest winner of the Romeo Forbes Children's Story Writing Competition, *Daughter and the Great Fish*, which would be his last. *Doll Eyes*, one of the many titles he designed for CANVAS, won the 2012 National Children's Book Award. At every book launch, he would proudly announce to almost anyone he met "Ang cute ng book, 'no?! Ako designer niyan!" with a little chortle.

In between designing books and art-directing for CANVAS, he also made time for his own personal artistic pursuits — as a children's book illustrator and a painter. He illustrated *Bugtong, Bugtong*, two volumes of Filipino riddles (Tahanan Books, 1998 and 2013) and worked two years on the picture book *Dalawa ang Daddy ni Billy*, a story of two gay fathers raising a child (Tahanan Books, 2018).

Signing his works as Palma Tayona, Dan continued to join art exhibitions such as our annual Looking for Juan Outdoor Banner Project, to which his piece "Mela," a pen and ink work on the origin story of the gumamela flower, was a contribution. CANVAS has kept this particularly striking work to be part of the Tumba-tumba Museum's permanent collection.

It saddens us greatly that he will no longer be with us, as we write the next chapters of CANVAS. But he will always be an important part of the entire book, and we are forever grateful.



Daniel always had a curious spirit, eager for stories and their retellings — two reasons why he loved his home in Pasay City, where he could people-watch from his apartment window or go down to the streets to converse with community. These characters — random acquaintances or sometimes intimate friends — would eventually become voluptuous figures in his paintings.

Daniel Palma Tayona was a storyteller by design — through his paintings, illustrations, and creative eye. He was CANVAS' creative director, our friend, *Fafa Dan*, and brother, already missed.



SEEKING BALANCE