

CANVAS

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celebrating philippine art, culture and environment

Newsletter 11th edition, January to March 2011

2010 The Year in Review and 2011 The Year to Come



JOIN THE 2011 ROMEO FORBES CHILDREN'S STORY WRITING COMPETITION!!!

We're ready and looking forward to be enthralled and surprised!

It's time to again start the New Year with an invitation for you to join and submit an entry to our annual **Romeo Forbes Children's Story Writing Competition!**

This year, Liv Vinluan does the honors and provides the inspiration with this new contest piece:



For contest rules, visit our official blog at www.lookingforjuan.com.

We will start this review at the end – the publication just this December of *Doll Eyes*. Written by Eline Santos and rendered in fine detail by Joy Mallari, *Doll Eyes* marked a milestone of sorts for CANVAS – our tenth children's book in five years.

To celebrate, simultaneous with the exhibition of artworks for *Doll Eyes*, we held a retrospective of selected artworks from our

previous books. Both shows were held at the Vargas Museum in UP.

We actually had a preliminary retrospective at the Ortigas Foundation Library. A couple of months earlier, **From CANVAS to Paper: Turning Paintings into Children's Books** also featured

art pieces from our children's books. The exhibit was part of Book Matters, a program of the Lopez Memorial Museum, the Ortigas Foundation Library, and the



Robinson's Children's Library that encourages and creates opportunities for the public to read works of Filipino authors and publishers.

This year, we again attempted to open avenues and opportunities for Filipino writers with our **Story Writing for Young Readers Competition** where five authors got to be read, reviewed and provided feedback by Kelly Sonnack, a highly respected children's lit agent in the US.

Our first tie-up with Kelly back in 2008 saw Rocky Tirona win for her story, "My Big Sister Can See Dragons." Happily, that story finally earned official representation this year by the San Diego-based Andrea Brown Literary Agency which will now try to find a secure home for it with a publishing house in the US. We hope we will be able to work the same magic with this year's winner, Kate Osias and her story, "Apolinario and the Name Trader."



Of course we began 2010 with our flagship activity – the annual **Romeo Forbes Children's Story Writing Competition** – this time with 13 Artists Awardee Don Salubayba's contest piece (shown above) providing the inspiration. We received a record number of entries, and in the end, Issa Alarilla-

Arellano emerged triumphant for "Tahan na, Tahanan." We were especially gratified to learn that Issa is based in Dubai, and is our first Bagong Bayani to win the competition. We are very excited to see Don bring her story, which is fittingly about home and family, to life in August 2011.

Then too, modest shows at



Some of the artists showcased at Looking for Juan in Serendra in 2010. (Clockwise from top left: Jill Arwen Posadas, Cathy Lasam, Daniel Aligaen (with Mark Arcamo), Farley del Rosario, Jomike Tejido, Juan Sajid Imao & Buen Calubayan)



our artspace in Serendra, and our participation in annual events like Manilart, Art in the Park and the American Women's Bazaar, kept us busy and on our toes throughout the year.

In 2010, we felt an increasing need to further deepen and promote our collective under-



standing and appreciation for our national identity through Philippine art. So we began to invest and lay the groundwork for more innovative, engaging and provocative **Looking for Juan** activities in the years to come.

We organized two major shows centered on what it means to be Filipino – both of which were also meant to contribute to the debates and discussions that surrounded the historic 2010 national elections.

Dekalogo – a tribute to, and reflections on the words of the Sublime Paralytic which we realized continued to hold relevance even today – was the first major undertaking.

And, for the second straight year, we mounted our **Outdoor**

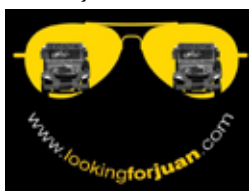
Banner Exhibition – this time focusing on the theme of Everyday Filipino Heroes.



As before, the tarpaulin banners were recycled and transformed into art totes, which were then sold, with proceeds benefiting the Vargasa Museum.

Taking off from these projects, we took three major steps to strengthen and highlight our Looking for Juan Program.

First off, we've renamed 1/Of Gallery to Looking for Juan - dedicating the artspace for young Filipino artists who will use the venue for shows that can express their thoughts on what it means to be Filipino.



Second, we launched a new website - www.lookingforjuan.com - and in 2011, we plan to use it a serious vehicle to further broaden the program's scope, visibility and impact.



And third, we've invested in new equipment to pursue a new long-term project starting in 2011 - **Mga Kuwento Natin**. Inspired by StoryCorps, we hope to record conversations between and among Filipinos, both as a sort of shared oral history, and also, as a source of further inspiration for more events, shows and activities that can showcase Philippine art and culture in meaningful and relevant ways.

What do we see in store for 2011?

The **Romeo Forbes Children's Story Writing Competition** will again start the year off with a contest piece from Liv Vinluan.



Painting by Juanito Torres for Mga Huni sa Loob ng

We have two new children's book - both winners of our Writing Competition - in the pipeline. First to come, in April or May, will be "Mga Huni sa Loob ng Kawayan," a fictional take by Fernando Gonzalez on making of the famed Bamboo Organ with artist Juanito Torres doing the honors. Then in August, Don Salubayba brings his talents to bring Issa Alarilla-Arellano's "Tahan na, Tahanan" to life.

2011 also marks the 150th birth year of Jose Rizal, and we have two major **Looking for Juan** projects in store. First, organizing what is now an annual **Outdoor**



Left to right: Vim Nadera, Elmer Borlongan and Gigo Alampay

Banner Project around Rizal and his influence was an obvious and easy decision.

And, second, we have a special collaborative project between artist Elmer Borlongan and poet Vim Nadera to produce a new **ABAKADA** book, with each letter of the Philippine alphabet corresponding to a particular aspect of Rizal's life.

Each letter will be accompanied by a poem for children by Vim, and rendered through *letras y figuras* interpretations by Emong.

Mga Kuwento Natin will also start churning stories and podcasts as we try to build more content into our Looking for Juan website.

We have great shows scheduled as well in the Looking for Juan artspace in Serendra - Leonard Aguinaldo, Tammy Tan, Farley del Rosario, Ugu Bigyan, Salvador Ching, Anthony Palomo, and Jim Orencio, among others, are just some of the artists we have on the schedule.

Next year, too, we will continue to take more pro-active policy and developmental roles for CANVAS.

For one, here's a thought that we've had for some time. Even as Hong Kong and Singapore are trying to establish themselves as the regional centers of art in

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Southeast Asia, the Philippines can rightly establish itself as a similar center on the supply side. Indeed, with our tradition of democracy and history of struggling for human rights – we believe that we can, and should position the country as the regional safe haven for artists and free expression in Southeast Asia.

In this vein, to start, we're trying bring in artists from a few countries with past and present free expression problems – Burma, Vietnam, Indonesia – to interact with some of our artists here. And maybe that can lead to even more interactions and ideas in the future... we'll see and keep you posted.

As a second idea, we want to raise the funds necessary to commission an honest-to-goodness survey of the role, impact and contribution of

the art sector to the Philippine economy. London and New York did it – and showed convincingly that the arts – in terms of jobs created, and revenues generated – were truly important to their respective economies.

We hope to do something similar through a project we're calling *Malikhaing Maynila*. We believe that if we can produce the data, with rigor and credibility, then we can have some solid, fact-based arguments to present to our policymakers to convince them to take the arts more seriously, and to therefore provide more funding and support to what we honestly believe is a major engine of growth for the country.

One final note. As an organization, CANVAS is just a child, with much to learn, and with much need for continuing guidance and support.

Frankly, we like being small (although, to be sure, our success is more directly attributable to the support and participation of the hundreds of artists and writers, and supporters, we work with on various projects throughout the year). It allows us to be nimble, creative and flexible, and not be constrained by too much structure.

That said, we realize that our plans, and all the things we want to in the coming years do require us to grow a bit more. And so as a start, we will likely begin an internship program – both to help us out, and equally important, to continue to infuse CANVAS with new blood, ideas and passion.

2011 is going to be an exciting year. Join us, as we continue on our mission to use Philippine art to change the world!

How can you support CANVAS?

- Visit our online store at www.canvasdownstream.com. A complete range of giftware featuring the art from all of our books is available there.

- Buy our limited edition children's books – available at Fully Booked, Powerbooks, Philippine Heritage Library, Ayala Museum, and at 1/Of Gallery in Serendra. You can also email us at info@canvas.ph to place an order for any of our books.

- We're open to corporate partnerships and sponsorships. Please let us know if

you or anyone you know is interested in sponsoring any
A selection of CANVAS' award-winning children's books



- of our events.

And, needless to say, just telling all your friends about CANVAS, Looking for Juan, and Canvas Downstream will greatly help and will be deeply appreciated!

ABOUT CANVAS

The Center for Art, New Ventures and Sustainable Development (CANVAS) promotes greater awareness and appreciation for Philippine art and culture principally through exhibitions and projects that not only showcase artworks from some of the best young contemporary Filipino artists around, but also lead to the publication of books, prints, and other merchandise that make these artworks more



CANVAS website

accessible to more people.

To read our children's stories, view past exhibits and to learn more about CANVAS, please visit www.canvas.ph.

For constant updates on our events and musings, please visit our official blog www.lookingforjuan.com.

To purchase merchandise and giftware featuring artworks from some of the best young Filipino artists today, please visit www.canvasdownstream.com. For all other concerns, please email info@canvas.ph