



PRESS RELEASE

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The Philippine Pavilion Successfully Opens at the 60th Venice Art Biennale

Venice, Italy – April 18, 2024 – The Philippine Pavilion at the 60th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia has opened its doors, featuring an exploration of art, history, and environment in the exhibition, *Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito / Waiting just behind the curtain of this age*.

Artist Mark Salvatus and curator Carlos Quijon, Jr. have crafted an immersive experience that delves into the ethno-ecologies of Mt. Banahaw and Lucban, drawing inspiration from the mystical energy of the mountain and its rich cultural heritage. Through a newly-commissioned video installation, the pavilion serves as a stage for exploring Mt. Banahaw's vitality and its profound connections to broader narratives of faith, mysticism, and revolution.

At the heart of the exhibition lies the enigmatic figure of Hermano Puli, whose prophetic words inspire the title and spirit of the showcase. Puli's legacy as a revolutionary lay preacher is intricately woven into narratives of anti-colonial resistance, envisioning a transformative future that transcends cultural boundaries and embraces the more-than-human.

Salvatus's exploration extends to the vibrant musical traditions of Lucban-based musicians, highlighting the Young Banahaw Orchestra and the Babat Orchestra. Through their stories and ongoing musical legacy, the exhibition broadens the discourse on migration, identity, and the shaping of modern soundscapes in the Asia Pacific region.

With an eye for detail and a keen sense of purpose, Salvatus unravels stories of renewal, environmental stewardship, and the transformative power of the local imagination.

Art enthusiasts, dignitaries from around the world and friends from the Filipino community in Italy gathered to celebrate the opening of the exhibition at the Artiglierie of the Arsenale in Venice, one of the main exhibition spaces of the Venice Biennale.





Senate Pro Tempore Loren Legarda, visionary and driving force behind the Philippine Participation at the Venice Biennale joined the opening and shared, "May the exhibition serve as a catalyst for dialogue and inspiration, igniting a renewed appreciation for the profound bond between humanity and the environment."

In his message, Chair Victorino M. Manalo, Chair of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and Commissioner of the Philippine Pavilion, remembers Hermano Puli's legacy and enduring spirit, "Through art and storytelling, we pay tribute to the countless unsung heroes who have shaped our nation's history, their voices echoing through the ages as a reminder of the power of resilience and faith."

Encapsulating the spirit of the exhibition, His Excellency Nathaniel G. Imperial of the Philippine Embassy in Rome offered a reminder "that our cultural heritage is not just a reflection of our past, but a beacon guiding us towards a more hopeful future."

The sustained participation of the Philippine Pavilion at the Venice Biennale is a collaborative endeavor of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), and the Office of Senate President Pro Tempore Loren B. Legarda.

Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito / Waiting just behind the curtain of this age is open to the public at the Arsenale from April 20, 2024, to November 24, 2024.

About the Artist

Mark Salvatus (b. 1980) works and lives between Lucban and Quezon City, Philippines. He studied Advertising (cum laude) at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila.

Calling his overall artistic practice "Salvage Projects," a name that corresponds to the meaning of his surname, Salvatus has presented his works in different exhibitions and venues including the UP Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Center, the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, and the Metropolitan Museum in Manila; Mori Art Museum in Tokyo; MMCA in Seoul; Asia Society and ISCP in New York; Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien in Berlin; CHAT and Osage Art Foundation in Hong Kong; Hong-gah Museum in Taipei; Kamloops Art Gallery in Calgary, Alberta; La Trobe Art Institute, Bendigo and Brunei Gallery, SOAS, University of London.

He has participated in several art festivals and biennales including the Asian Art Biennial, Taichung (2021); Lahore Biennale (2020); Sharjah Biennale (2019); PCAN Pavilion, Gwangju Biennale (2018); Thessaloniki Biennale (2017); Philippine Pavilion, 15th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia (2016); SONSBECK International, Arnhem (2016); Prologue Exhibition: Honolulu Biennale (2014); Singapore Biennale (2011); Guangzhou Triennale (2011); Jakarta Biennale (2011 and 2015); and Koganecho Bazaar, Yokohama (2011). Salvatus is also part of *Notes*





for Tomorrow, a traveling exhibition from 2021-2025 organized by Independent Curators International.

Salvatus had residencies in Asia Culture Center (ACC) Gwangju; Rijksakademie, Amsterdam; IASPIS Umea, Sweden; Art OMI, New York; Common Room Networks Foundation, Bandung; and, Goyang Art Studio, South Korea. He was also a recipient of the 13 Artists Award from the Cultural Center of the Philippines (2012) and Ateneo Art Awards (2010).

In 2012, he co-founded 98B COLLABoratory, a multi-disciplinary site for creative sharing, discussion and collaboration. He also founded Load na Dito in 2016 with Mayumi Hirano, a curatorial and research project based in Manila.

About the Curator

Carlos Quijon, Jr. (b. 1989) is an art historian, critic, and curator based between Manila and New York. He is the C-MAP Fellow for Southeast and East Asia at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. He was a fellow of the research platform Modern Art Histories in and across Africa, South and Southeast Asia (MAHASSA), convened by the Getty Foundation's Connecting Art Histories project. He has written exhibition reviews for publications such as *e-flux*, *Frieze*, *Artforum*. His essays are part of the books *Writing Presently* (Manila: Philippine Contemporary Art Network, 2019) and *From a History of Exhibitions Towards a Future of Exhibition-Making: China and Southeast Asia* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2019), and *SEA: Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia* (Berlin: Weiss Publications, 2022). He has published in *Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art* (SG), *Afro-Asian Visions* (UK), MoMA's *post* (US), *Queer Southeast Asia* (Singapore), *ArtReview Asia* (Singapore), *Art Monthly* (UK), Asia Art Archive's *Ideas* (HK), and *Trans Asia Photography Review* (US), among others. In 2017, he was a research resident in Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Seoul and a fellow of the Transcuratorial Academy both in Berlin and Mumbai. He was a curatorial resident at the International Studio and Curatorial Program in New York (funded by the Asian Cultural Council) in 2023 and the Singapore Art Museum in 2024. He curated *Courses of Action* in Hong Kong in 2019 and *a will for prolific disclosures* in Manila in 2020; co-curated *Minor Infelicities* in Seoul in 2020 and the traveling exhibition series *Afro-Southeast Asia: Pragmatics and Geopoetics of Art during a Cold War* in Singapore (2021), Manila (2021-2), and Busan (2022). He is the curator of the research, publication, and exhibition platform *Archipelagic Futurisms* (2022-).

