

Andi  
All  
taku  
of us  
e sana,  
present,  
Amung  
This  
taku  
is our  
di sana  
gathering

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## The Philippine Pavilion Opens at the 59<sup>th</sup> Venice Art Biennale 2022

**VENICE, ITALY** – The Philippines opened its National Pavilion at the 59<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition of la Biennale di Venezia on April 21, 2022. It will be open for public viewing until November 27, 2022.

Located in the Arsenale – a main exhibition space in la Biennale alongside other national pavilions – the Philippine Pavilion features *Andi taku e sana, Amung taku di sana* / All of us present, This is our gathering, curated by Yael Buencamino Borromeo and Arvin Flores, featuring the works of Sammy N. Buhle, Felicidad A. Prudente and Gerry Tan.

The exhibition performs a convergence of cultural expressions that creates spaces for inquiry into traditional and contemporary art forms. The first work, *Speaking in Tongue*, is a two-channel video installation featuring the translation of a traditional chant into performative painting using squid ink as a medium. It is followed by *Renderings*, which shows the transmission of sound made from traditional weaving practices remediated in video and textile material. Throughout the process of production, translation and rendering, the work lends itself to the artists' agency through improvisation and an open interpretation of the audience, thus creating space for investigation and exchange.

*Andi taku e sana, Amung taku di sana* are the opening lines of a *Sogna*, a chant performed extemporaneously to express the self to participants in a gathering and forms part of important Madukayan occasions.<sup>1</sup> It translates to "All of us present, This is our gathering." The chant is performed prior to a peaceful dialogue among the members of the community. It is from the performed chant of esteemed chanter Jose Pangsiw wherein Felicidad A. Prudente, one of the leading ethnomusicologists in the country, created a transcription which was subsequently depicted as a performative painting by visual artist Gerry Tan for the work, *Speaking in Tongue*.

The exhibition involves an interdisciplinary approach to transmitting culture with sound and textile, weaving the customary and the contemporary across the archipelago. The process of creating *Renderings* began with an audio recording of weaving sounds in different weaving houses around the Philippines, which was then notated by Prudente, providing visual

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<sup>1</sup> The Madukayan people belong to the Kalinga ethnolinguistic community of the Philippines, majority of whom are located in the northern Cordillera region of the country.

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representation to the soundscapes. It is then sketched by Tan, in consultation with established Ifugao weaver Sammy N. Buhle, before the latter transformed it into an elaborate woven fabric. “In my designs, the music is articulated,” explains Buhle. It then results in an expression of a series of translations – completed by the textile-cum-musical score; yet offering itself for further translation and rendition by its viewer. In this multi-disciplinary collaboration, Buhle, Prudente and Tan – three artists with completely diverse practices – created new forms of knowledge, process and language.

*Andi taku e sana, Amung taku di sana / All of us present, This is our gathering,* presents a highly mediated process of generating sound, performance, image and object by conveying the production and translation of the source cultural sounds of chanting and weaving into notations, visual art and textiles. Tan explains, “A lot of my work has this self-referential aspect to them. It feeds back on itself. There’s a loop that’s being created. As a viewer, when you approach the work, you present it with different realities at the same time. There’s a dialogue between materials and processes.”

Curators Yael Buencamino Borrromeo and Arvin Flores states, “Through the exploration of sound material and field recordings of indigenous weaving practices across the Philippines, the exhibit aims to represent the translation of cultural data into visual communication, collectively promoting Philippine traditions and ensuring its endurance through universal exchange.” Prudente adds, “the exhibition encourages one to be open to collaborative work because when you create new knowledge, you are able to produce something unique, like what we are presenting in the Venice Biennale.” Flores agrees, “You look at the original sources, then you look at the offspring, then you see connections. Then from there you can create a new language.”

Project visionary Deputy Speaker and Congresswoman Loren Legarda shares, Among the many issues it seeks to take up, the Philippine Pavilion exhibition hopes to start a discussion on the formation of communities through experimentation and exchange. And thus, through this exhibition of the Philippines in this important platform, we share with the world how we can keep the essence of communities alive.”

“Through the works of Filipino artists, curators and thinkers, we hope to inspire ways of doing and being so as to try to address the globe’s most pressing problems and to be once again be able to see the value of community and to work with others,” stated National Commission of Culture and the Arts Chairman and Philippine Pavilion Commissioner Arsenio “Nick” Lizaso.

The Philippine participation at the 59<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia is a collaborative undertaking of the National

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Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), and the Office of Deputy Speaker and Congresswoman Loren Legarda. The Commissioner of the Philippine Pavilion is Arsenio “Nick” J. Lizaso, Chairman of the NCCA.

The Philippine Pavilion will also be made accessible through its digital programs and virtual tours, which will be accessible to the public, anywhere in the world. To learn more about this, visit [philartsvenicebiennale.org](http://philartsvenicebiennale.org). See updates on Facebook and Instagram via [@philartsvenice](https://www.instagram.com/philartsvenice).

### **The Curators**

Yael Buencamino Borromeo is Head of Programs and Audience Engagement at Lopez Museum and Library and was the director of Manila Museums Summit 2021. Her professional interests lie in interdisciplinary initiatives in cultural institutions and museum development. She was the founding Executive Director of Areté, the creativity and innovation hub of Ateneo de Manila University (2017-2019) and managing curator of the Ateneo Art Gallery (2007-2017). She contributed to the book *Making Museums Work: A Zero In Handbook*. She holds an MA in Southeast Asian Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Arvin Flores has an MFA graduate degree from the School of the Arts, Columbia University, New York and a BFA from the College of Creative Studies, University of California at Santa Barbara. He is also co-Director of Artery Art Space, an artist-run gallery in Manila since 2014. A practicing artist, Flores has done independent curatorial work, and writes as an extension of his creative and critical practice.

### **The Artists**

Sammy N. Buhle belongs to the younger generation of weaving artisans of Ifugao Province. He comes from a family of weavers who taught him the art of weaving at an early age. Born in 1989 in Banaue, he acknowledges his maternal grandmother Kittayan Niploy, a respected and well-known weaver in her time, and his mother Angelina Niploy who continues to weave using a backstrap loom. His father Fernando Buhle specializes in dyeing and is a weaver as well. While he took up a management accounting degree, he decided to pursue his passion for weaving. He now manages the family weaving house and actively participates in textile fairs.

Felicidad A. Prudente is one of the leading Filipino ethnomusicologists in the country today. Her field of expertise is in indigenous music cultures with a specialization in Philippine music. Having conducted field research around the Philippines over the years, Prudente has written and published articles on various aspects of Philippine music such as epic singing, vocal

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polyphony, and gong culture. She is currently an active member of the International Council for Traditional Music and its study group on the performing arts of Southeast Asia where she regularly presents her research.

Gerardo Tan works across media from painting, collage, photography and artists books to video and found objects in room-sized installations. His work deals with issues of representation and conceptual plays. He often appropriates reproduced images from the world of art and mass-media in order to subvert hierarchies and give way to new itinerant meanings. In 1982, Tan was part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Asian Art Show at the Fukuoka Museum, Japan and in 1999, he was the representative of the Philippines to the first Melbourne International Biennale. His work is represented in the collections of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the Singapore Art Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Central Bank of the Philippines and the Ateneo Art Gallery. His distinctions include a Fulbright-Hays Grant at SUNY Buffalo, the Barbara Schuller's Arts Associate Awards in Buffalo, NY, 44<sup>th</sup> Western NY Exhibition, the Juror's Choice Award from the Art Association of the Philippines and a CCP 13 Artists Award from the Cultural Center of the Philippines. He regularly exhibits in museums and galleries in Asia, the US, Europe and Australia. Tan lives and works in Manila, Philippines.

View the exhibition brochure [here](#).