

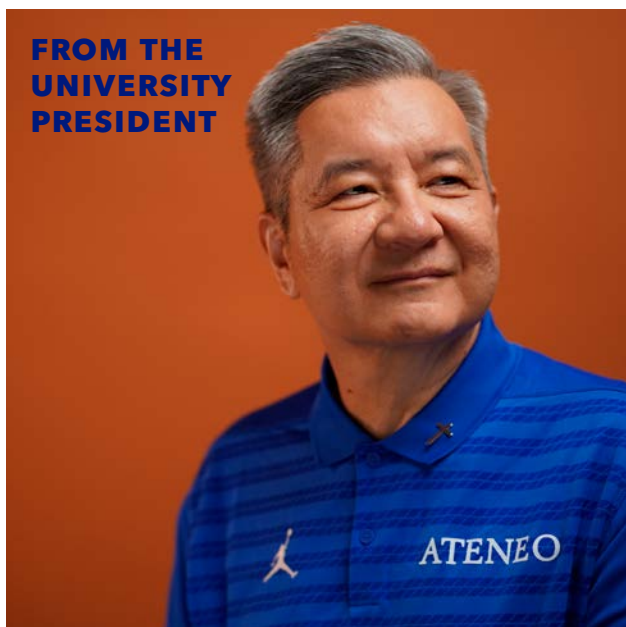


ATENEO

DE MANILA

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ATENEO ART GALLERY AT 65 • CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS
KOMIKS ARCHIVES: A PERSONAL HISTORY • **ATENEO FINE ARTS AT 25**
EPICS.ATENEO.EDU RETURNS • CREATIVE & SCHOLARLY WORK AWARDS • **A SEM ONSTAGE**



**FROM THE
UNIVERSITY
PRESIDENT**

THE ARTS ARE A PILLAR OF JESUIT EDUCATION.

Whether visual, musical, or dramatic, Jesuits believe in the arts' strength to delight, teach, and move. In the words of Cicero, "*delectare, docere, movere*." The arts help us discover ourselves, teaching us creativity, resilience, flexibility, humility, and empathy, allowing us to gain a broader perspective of the world. They are an expression of the gifts and talents God has given us, and so it is upon us to use the arts to reveal God's creation—the true, the good, and the beautiful.



Ateneo de Manila builds on this tradition, fostering an inclusive community where the arts are alive and thriving. The arts enrich the whole fabric of the University. Our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends have different ways of harnessing the power of the arts, cultivating a culture of imagination and ingenuity, and inspiring everyone to express themselves.

The arts are an expression of human experience, and as we all know, they are best appreciated when shared. This issue of the *Ateneo de Manila* magazine is an invitation to do this.

Learn more about the Ateneo Art Gallery (AAG). Recognized as the first museum of modern Philippine art, AAG continues to be a space that bridges the gap between the real world and the imagined—a vehicle for artists to express themselves without judgment.

Ateneo Fine Arts, now in its 25th year, continues this formation in art, design, and performance.

We also spotlight two collections in Rizal Library. The Komiks Archive is one of the most extensive collections in the country. These graphic stories, which are sure to delight the young and young at heart, reflect a myriad of perspectives unique to Filipino culture. Meanwhile, our oldest stories—preserved in the Philippine Epics and Ballads collection—are once again widely accessible at the relaunched epics.ateneo.edu.

Another way to experience Filipino culture is through Ateneo Cultural Encounters. Filled with immersion activities, acts of volunteerism, and direct engagement with local communities, it is a wonderful opportunity to savor Filipino culture. Inside this issue, you'll see some ways students, visiting students, and non-students learn by doing.

There is something to learn and discover from every feature in this issue. I invite you to dive and explore the rich world of arts and culture at Ateneo de Manila. I hope you will read with a bold mind and an open heart, filled with the excitement of learning, the joy of discovery, and always with a desire to enrich humanity.

Robby, 7

Roberto C Yap SJ

PRESIDENT, ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY

ON OUR COVER FERNANDO ZÓBEL, 1960
Castilla VIII
Oil on canvas
105 cm x 75 cm
Gift of the Artist

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The Blue Eagle Gym Reopens in May 2025
PHOTO **AARON VICENCIO**

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VICENTE MANANSALA
 Dambana, 1956
 Enamel, oil, and tin strips
 on fiberboard
 92 x 66.5 cm

ATENEEO ART GALLERY

65 years since a generous donation led to its founding, the museum has grown into an important institution at the nexus of Philippine modern and contemporary art.

AAG at 65

VICTORIA "BOOTS" HERRERA

The founding of the Ateneo Art Gallery in 1960 marked the birth of a modest university art museum.

After 65 years, it has since grown into an institution entrusted with the care of an important collection of Philippine modern and contemporary art. The years 2024 and 2025 are landmark years for AAG as we celebrate Fernando Zóbel's birth centennial and the museum's 65th year, respectively.

A LEGACY OF GIFTS

The donation from Fernando Zóbel de Ayala y Montojo (1924-1984) of his personal collection of postwar Philippine modern art to Ateneo de Manila University was the impetus that led to the creation of the museum.

A visual artist, art scholar, and art patron, his affluence and influence supported the new and progressive works of modernist artists in the 1950s



VICENTE MANANSALA
Jeepneys
1951
Enamel on fiberboard
51 x 59 cm
Gift of Fernando Zóbel

FERNANDO ZÓBEL
Saeta No. 36, 1957
Oil on canvas, 61.5 x 92 cm
Gift of Roger Keyes



who gained recognition at the Art Association of the Philippines annual competitions and exhibited at the Philippine Art Gallery. Zóbel first taught art history and art appreciation under the Ateneo Graduate School in the 1950s. He valued the role of art and the humanities as part of a holistic education, particularly in a country still in the process of rebuilding from the devastations of war.

When he finally decided to reside in Spain, Zóbel deemed Ateneo as the ideal steward of his collection—an educational institution that had a strong tradition of liberal education. He subsequently gifted his collection European prints from the Renaissance period to the twentieth century. Altogether, he donated almost 300 artworks to the University that served as a “study collection.”

The Ateneo Art Gallery, with Emmanuel “Eric” Torres as its first curator, became an integral component of the University’s humanities program. More than three decades after the museum

opened, Torres wrote: “The decision to give it all to a leading university...was hailed in cultural and media circles as a large step forward in the advancement of Philippine Art.”

Even in its modest spaces at the University’s Loyola Heights campus—first in a classroom at Bellarmine Hall and then at the Rizal Library (now the Special Collections Building)—the AAG collection gradually grew through donations from Zóbel’s friends, university alumni, art patrons, and artist friends.

In the 1980s, Torres steered the acquisitions towards strengthening a collection of social realism in the Philippines. It has since been acknowledged as an important representation of works by Pablo Been Santos, Antipas Delotavo, Renato Habulan, Edgar Talusan Fernandez, and Jose Tence Ruiz, among others. Since moving to its current facilities in Areté in 2018, the Ateneo Art Gallery has received more donations—mostly from artists and alumni. Its current collection has now increased

TOP

ARTURO LUZ
Vendador de Flores, 1952
Oil on lawanit, 54.5 x 70 cm
Gift of Fernando Zóbel

**BOTTOM**

FERNANDO ZÓBEL
Saeta No. 37, 1957
Oil on canvas, 61 x 91 cm
Gift of the Artist



ARTURO LUZ
Awit, 1953
Oil on lawanit, 48 x 37.5 cm
Gift of Fernando Zóbel



almost tenfold from the original core donation from Zóbel of over 200 works. It has expanded to fill gaps in Philippine Art, represent contemporary practices, and grew its collection of fine prints by local and international artists. Various loan requests from local and foreign museums attest to the importance of the university's art collection.

SUPPORT FOR ARTISTS, WRITERS & NEW PARTNERSHIPS

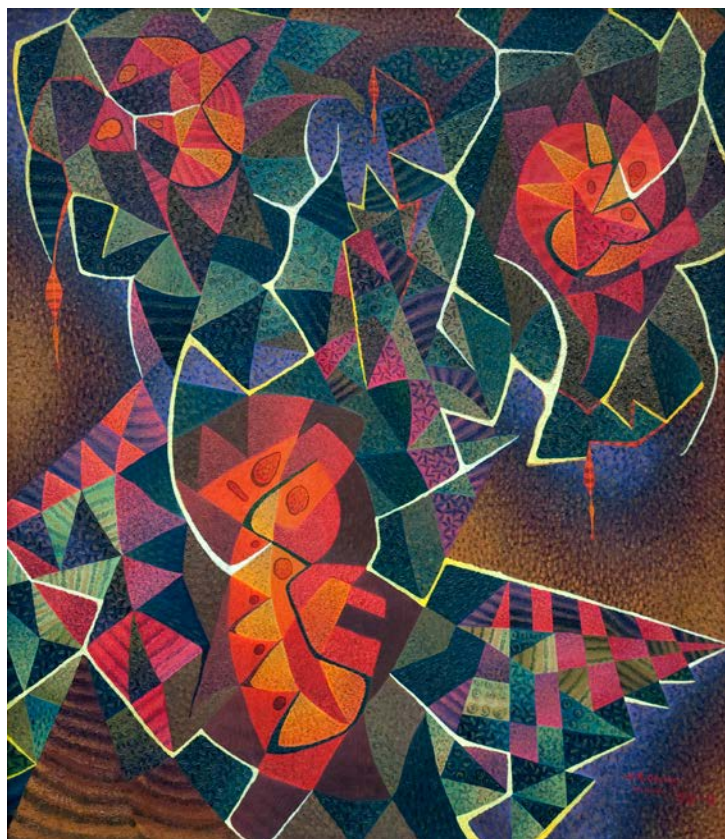
In the early years of the new millennium, the university museum also expanded as an organization and in its programs. Following the spirit of Zóbel's role as art patron, AAG advocated support for young artists (below 36 years of age) through a contemporary art prize—the Ateneo Art Awards (AAA). It was conceived in 2004 by Ramon ES Lerma, the second AAG Director and Chief Curator (2003-2005), together with Yael Borromeo-Buencamino, its Managing Curator (2003-2018).

Initiated as a visual arts prize, the program added an art criticism prize in 2014 in partnership

with the Kalaw Ledesma Foundation, Inc. The tandem prizes since then have been named the Fernando Zóbel Prizes for Visual Art and the Purita Kalaw-Ledesma Prizes in Art Criticism, paying tribute to the museum's founding donor and one of the founders of the Art Association of the Philippines, respectively.

After two decades, the Ateneo Art Awards program is deemed as an important recognition given to visual artists and art writers, contributing to the vibrant growth of the contemporary art scene. Its roster of winning artists represent seminal art practitioners renowned locally and internationally. Winning writers contribute to developing an informed audience and some have also extended their interests towards curatorial practice.

The awards program has also been a platform to establish new partnerships with other universities, publishers, and local artist initiatives for one-month residencies offered to visual artists and writers.



LEFT FROM TOP

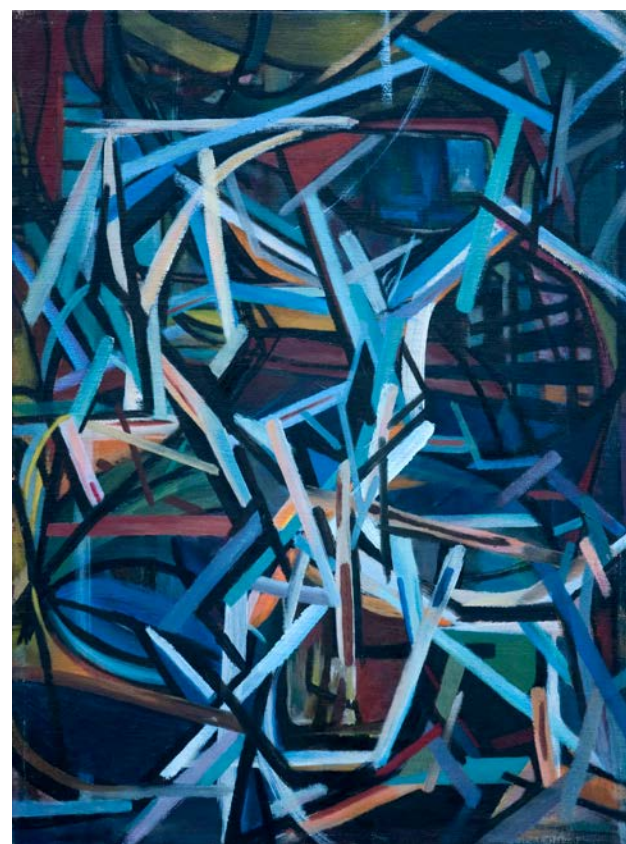
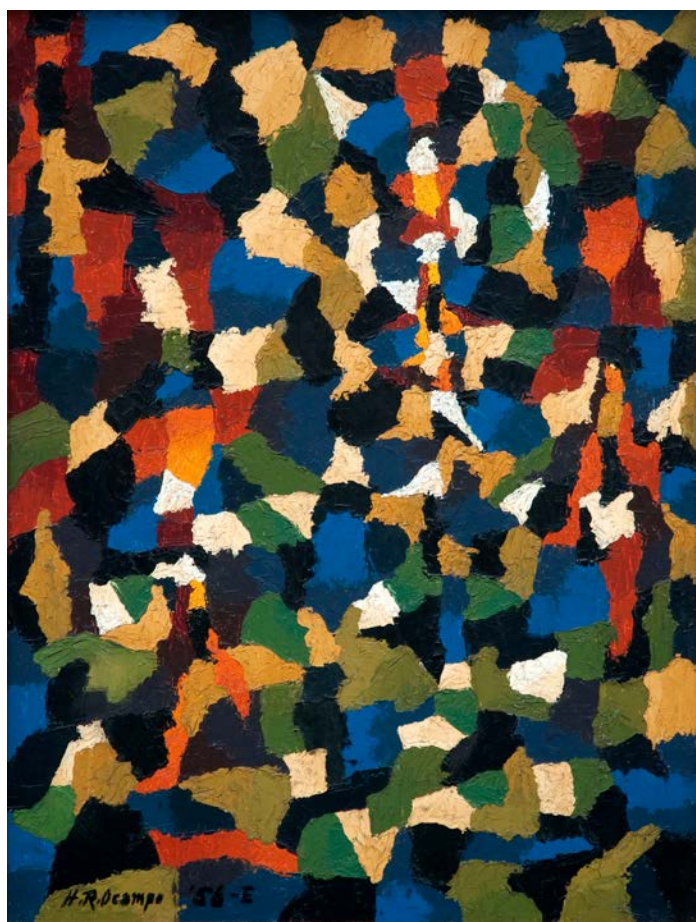
HERNANDO R. OCAMPO
53-Q (Sarimanok), 1953
Oil on canvas, 108.5 x 93.5 cm
Gift of Fernando Zóbel

HERNANDO R. OCAMPO
56-E (Joseph's Coat), 1956
Oil on lawanit, 60 x 45 cm
Gift of Fernando Zóbel

RIGHT FROM TOP

ANG KIUKOK
Table with Fish, 1960
Oil on plywood, 45 x 61 cm
Gift of Fernando Zóbel

VICTOR OTEYZA
Plastic Engineering No. 13, 1955
Oil on canvas board, 61 x 45 cm
Gift of Fernando Zóbel





These opportunities not only enrich the artist's and writer's professional practice but are also modes of creating networks among art communities.

EXPANDED PROGRAMMING IN ARETÉ

The new facilities of the Ateneo Art Gallery have provided more latitude to explore new directions in exhibitions and public engagement programs. The museum has collaborated with mid-career artists to present different facets of their practice that are often marginalized in the mainstream art scene. Collaborations with guest curators expound on new perspectives and lenses to view neglected art forms and review art history of the recent past. The exhibition *The 70s: Objects, Photographs and Documents*, curated by Ringo Bunoan focused on experimental and ephemeral art in the 1970s and presented works viewed as contemporary even after four decades later. *Not Visual Noise*, curated by Angel Velasco Shaw, featured a wide range of photography-based practices by 31 Filipino artists.

The university art museum's role within its community should not be overlooked. Even in

its early years, AAG had offered a space for its students to contemplate with art. Torres formed the Art Club, mostly with high school students as members, to help facilitate special events such as film screenings and guided tours for guests even on weekends. Education programs later included artist's and curator's talks, art workshops and lecture series facilitated by guest artists and academics. These continue to be staples to current public programming, made accessible to audiences within and outside the university. The museum's augmented team now includes education and marketing specialists who ensure that other sectors and communities outside the campus are reached and are provided with meaningful visitor experiences. •

Victoria "Boots" Herrera is the Director and Chief Curator of the Ateneo Art Gallery. She is also a faculty member at the Ateneo de Manila Department of Fine Arts where she teaches curatorship, collections management, and other museum-related courses.

ABOVE

FERNANDO ZÓBEL
Saeta No. 37, 1957
Oil on canvas, 61.5 x 92 cm
Gift of the Artist

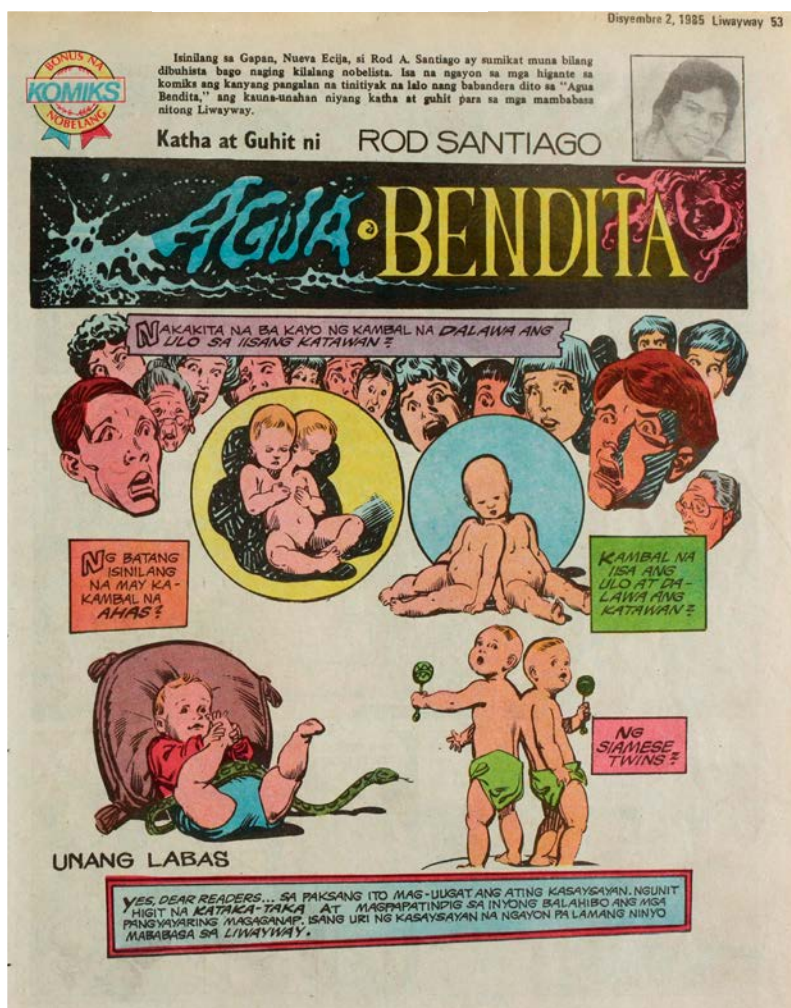
Researcher and poet Edgar Calabia Samar recounts how his love for komiks, a Filipino cultural touchstone, led to the creation of Ateneo's komiks archive.

Serial Lives:

**A personal history of the
Rizal Library Komiks Archives**

EDGAR CALABIA SAMAR PhD

Splash page from the first issue of Rod Santiago's *Agua Bendita* (*Liwayway*, 2 December 1985)



When grown-ups asked what I wanted to be, I did not answer with the usual doctor, lawyer, or engineer. I said I wanted to be a komiks writer-illustrator

I was born at the tail end of an era when komiks, folded between magazines and newspapers, could be bought on the sidewalks, where stories stretched across weeks, months, and years. In those days, I read them hungrily, my six-year-old self turning the pages of *Pilipino Komiks*, *Aliwan*, *Hiwaga*, and other titles, cover to cover. It was a portal into a world where colors bled into stories, where villains with tragic pasts found themselves at war with heroes burdened by destiny.

When grown-ups asked what I wanted to be, I did not answer with the usual doctor, lawyer, or engineer. I said I wanted to be a komiks writer-illustrator, a dream ignited by Rod Santiago's full-color, three-page komiks novel *Agua Bendita*, serialized in *Liwayway*, which I had entered midway—because the story had begun long before I learned to read. The first lesson of komiks, then: you arrive *in medias res*, and the world is already in motion.

Years later, as a college student at Ateneo, I discovered that the Filipiniana section of the Rizal Library held a collection of *Liwayway* issues dating back to the 1920s. I traced the pages back to 2 December 1985—the unang labas of *Agua Bendita*, a story I had missed at its inception because I was only four. When it became a hit ABS-CBN soap opera in 2010, I felt a quiet triumph in already knowing its pulse, the slow rise of its arc over 186 issues, ending in June 1989. This is the magic of serialization: the way a story stretches itself into time, carrying its readers with it, leaving footprints in memory.

In 2006, I met Rod Santiago in person. It happened through an online forum that, in those days, still had room for discussions on Filipino

komiks. He invited me for coffee, and for five hours in a McDonald's, I listened to the man who had drawn my childhood into existence. Some dreams come true quietly, in plastic seats, over lukewarm coffee.

When I began teaching at the Kagawaran ng Filipino (Department of Filipino) in 2002, I knew komiks could not be left out of Philippine literature—something that was reinforced by pioneering scholars like Soledad S Reyes. *Liwayway*, often treated as an artifact rather than a living text, had to be read. I made sure of it.

My students accessed old issues—if only to remind the librarians that they were still needed, that their pages still had hands turning them, eyes reading them. In Fil 14 (now Fili 12), a survey class on Philippine literature, my students encountered texts like *Hayok sa Dugo*, Mars Ravelo's sci-fi horror revenge tale illustrated by Joey Otacan and Rey Samson. They already knew *Darna* and *Dyesebel*, but here was something darker, something wilder. Urbana, its protagonist, experimented on leeches, warping them into monstrous forms—her revenge against the city that had deemed her ugly. In that grotesque transformation, I saw the failure of *Urbana at Feliza*—Padre Modesto de Castro's 1864 moralizing epistolary on how women should behave. In *Hayok sa Dugo*, all that careful civility was devoured by rage.

Komiks, for all its fantastical trappings, have always been a mirror. In Komiks at Kababalaghan, an elective I taught, we traced that mirror back to its earliest reflection: Kenkoy, a character who first appeared in *Liwayway* in 1929. I remember the delight of uncovering a 1930 issue in which Kenkoy himself, in an act of playful metafiction, emerged from an inkwell, tried to scrawl *Maligayang Pasko* on the page, only to leap back in when he saw his creators approaching. The page itself became a threshold, the artist and the character inhabiting the same space, winking at each other across the decades.

And then there was *Kulafu*, the first serial komiks novel, written by Pedrito Reyes and illustrated by Francisco Reyes in 1933. From there, I followed the

TOP First page of the last issue of *Hayok sa Dugo* (*Liwayway*, 19 February 1990)

BOTTOM Mula sa *Album ng Kabalbalan* (*Liwayway*, 12 December 1930)





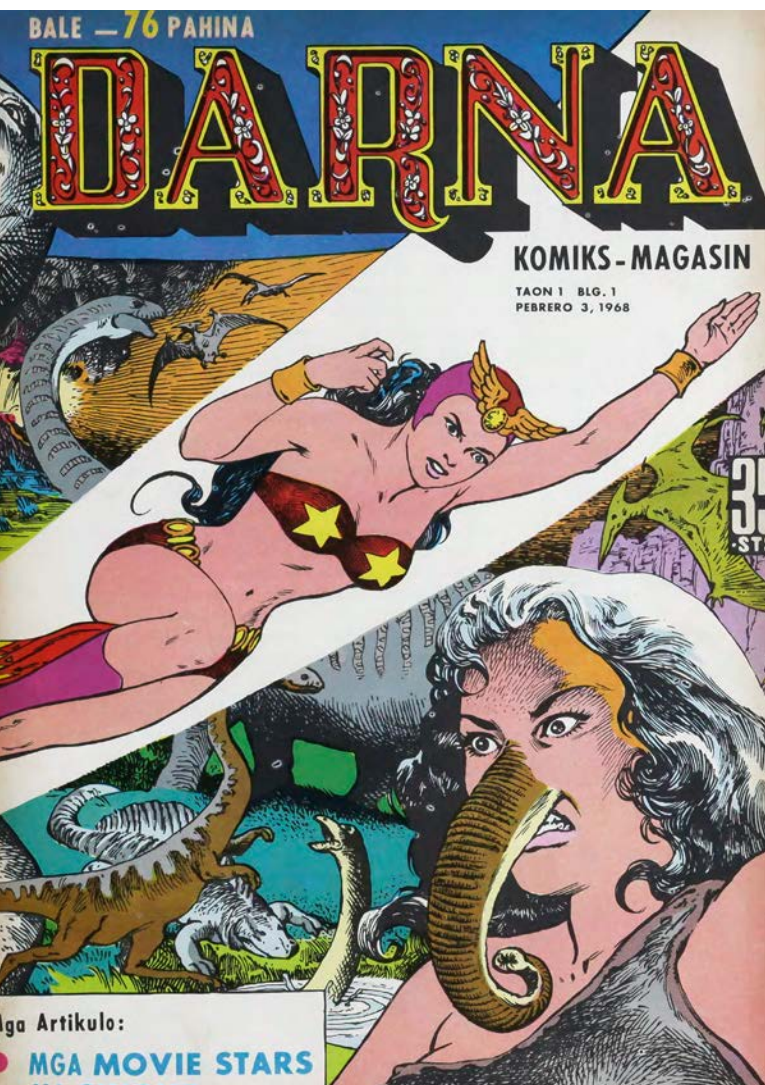
inked footsteps of Francisco V Coching's *Hagibis*, which began in *Liwayway* in 1946 and sprawled across the next decade in seven books. It was a komiks epic, interweaving Philippine pre-colonial history with myth, revealing what textbooks failed to tell: that we had our own heroes before they were flattened into symbols.

In 2013, my relationship with komiks took a turn. I had just been granted Research and Creative Work (RCW) faculty status—one of the first two from the Humanities, along with Fr Rene Javellana SJ. It was through this that I began writing Janus Silang while researching Philippine komiks. I spent my days moving from one library to another—Ateneo, the University of the Philippines, the National Library, the Lopez Museum—piecing together a history that was always in danger of being lost.

Then I stumbled upon the Samsons of Pampanga, a family selling their vast komiks collection on eBay. When I visited their home, I saw bound volumes—komiks that would have been



Cover of the first issue
of *Darna Komiks-Magasin*
(3 February 1968)



What was once
ephemeral—stories
that flickered week to
week on the sidewalks,
then disappeared—
is now preserved...

discarded if not for their bookbinding business. I could not buy them all. Instead, I scanned pages one by one, exchanging a day's scanning for a single bound volume. They had 240 binds left; many had already been sold. I knew then that this history could not remain in private hands. I asked Dr Vernon Totanes, the then-director of the Rizal Library, if we could acquire the collection. There would never be another chance to gather komiks in such bulk.

And then, as if history itself had conspired to save these pages, another twist: before we finalized the deal, Atlas Publishing donated their own komiks archive to the Rizal Library. I was given a list of their donations and invited to their warehouse in Cubao. Together with Joey Lagumen, then head of RL's Photoduplication Services, I saw 19 towering shelves of komiks. The sheer magnitude was overwhelming. There were *Tagalog Klasiks* from 1950, *Hiwaga* and *Espesyal Komiks* from 1952, and *Pilipino Komiks* from 1954.

And there, tucked between decades, was the first issue of *Darna Komiks-Magasin*, dated 3 February 1968, with Darna at ang Babaing Linta in its pages. After consolidating both collections, the Rizal Library acquired 122 binds from the Samsons, ensuring that stories serialized in titles like *Weekly Topstar*, *Modern Kayumanggi*, and *Bata-Batuta*—390 issues in total—found a permanent home.

It is easy to forget that many of the novels we now read in book form were first serials. Serialization, in many ways, is the heartbeat of Philippine literature, its rhythm echoing the way our stories have always been told—piecemeal, passed down, shared in fragments before they coalesce into myth. My research on komiks novels led me to present a paper on Mars Ravelo at the *International Graphic Novel & Comics Conference* at the University of Manchester in the UK in 2016.

Since 2020, I have been writing a column in *Liwayway* that revisits these forgotten komiks novels, thanks to the Rizal Library's collection. I've written, for example, that Filipino movie star Sharon Cuneta's film *Bituing Walang Ningning*, based on a komiks novel written by Nerissa G Cabral



Cover of *Pilipino Komiks*,
31 May 1983, featuring the first issue
of *Bituing Walang Ningning*



and illustrated by Ernie H Santiago—serialized in *Pilipino Komiks* from 1983 to 1985—was originally intended to focus more on Lavinia (the character played by actress Cherie Gil) rather than Dorina (the character played by Cuneta), as seen on the cover of the *Pilipino Komiks* issue from 31 May 1983. It can be said that Lavinia’s decision to choose her career over Nico was not an act of antagonism but a form of conviction, especially since she declared, “For me, love and success are both necessities in a person’s life.” [translation mine]

Today, these komiks are accessible to researchers in digital format at the Microform and Digital Resources Center of Ateneo’s Rizal Library. What was once ephemeral—stories that flickered week to week on the sidewalks, then disappeared—is now preserved, waiting for new readers, new scholars, new storytellers.

Thanks to the dedication of librarians like Dr Totanes, Tommy dela Cruz, and Estela Montejo, these stories remain, their ink unyielding against the erosion of time. Our former graduate student in the Filipino department, Jeremy Sim, also assisted me with scanning pages in the early stages.

Komiks has always been the literature of the people, its narratives unfolding in the space between the mythical and the everyday. And so I return to the lessons of those early years: the dream of being a komiks writer-illustrator (I found out later that I could not draw—at least not as well as others—but that I could write, and so I wrote novels, and some of them were adapted into komiks), the first stories I encountered in incomplete arcs, the realization that every page turned was part of a history much larger than myself. It is this history, now housed in the Rizal Library, that waits for those who will rediscover it. •



Multi-awarded and bestselling poet and novelist Edgar Calabia Samar PhD is Associate Professor and Chair of the Ateneo de Manila Kagawaran ng Filipino.

Ateneo Sociology and Anthropology's cultural encounters program lets students learn about Filipino culture and traditions through a multi-sensory experience.



Cultural Encounters

Experiencing cultural heritage at Ateneo

FERNANDO ZIALCITA PhD

“How are we original?”

Nothing beats experience in answering this age-old question—especially when it comes to learning about the originality of Filipino culture. This is what Ateneo Cultural Encounters (ACE) is trying to do: offering students the opportunity to experience vivid examples of Filipino achievements in various fields, including fashion, food, architecture, and music.

ACE helps achieve the goals of the Cultural Heritage Studies Program of the Ateneo Department of Sociology and Anthropology: Instilling pride of place and country; showing the relevance of cultural heritage to today’s pressing issues, including climate change, globalization, and sustainable development; and inspiring students to integrate cultural heritage into their long-term professional commitments.

IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

ACE has several components spread throughout the academic year.

The core course, “Introduction to Cultural Heritage,” offered every first semester, discusses cultural heritage, its relevance to contemporary concerns, ways to conserve heritage, and the importance of branding

Students are divided into teams and help an expert in a particular field, so they gain direct experience. For example, a team of students helped couturier Ditta Sandico in her efforts to promote local weaves – cotton wraps from the Hanunoo, abaca wraps from Bicol. Another team organized a dinner event with a chef featuring the

dishes of a region in the Philippines. Still another helped perfumer Oscar Mejia study local plants that can become fragrance ingredients.

The semester paper is a team report on their accomplishments while working with a particular expert. An important component of this team output is a reflection on the potential significance of their chosen cultural heritage form during the semester for both international and local audiences.

SENSORY EXPERIENCES

The second semester sequel to this course is the “Anthropology of the Senses” course, also called “Culture and the Senses.” It explores the five senses, tries to understand aspects of the language of each, and examines examples of Filipino heritage in each of these.

After learning the basics of visual language and being exposed to two themes in the Filipino



ABOVE Thea Sulangi’s grandmother Ursula demonstrates how to knot individual piña fibers into threads for weaving (Aklan, 2013)

SPREAD Exploring a mangrove park in Washington, Aklan (2013)



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT (2018)

The Minor Basilica of Our Lady of the Assumption, more commonly called the Santa Maria Church, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Santa Maria, Ilocos Sur)

A weaver discusses how she does the warp for *inabel* (Vigan)

Dinner at Casa Quema (Vigan)

Celebrating the birthday of a weaver with songs and a feast (Vigan)



visual field—1) “cornucopia baroque” and 2) translucency—students write a paper showing how these themes are present in two visual objects at the Ateneo Art Gallery. In music, students listen to two lectures by a music expert on the language of music and characteristics of, for example, Filipino versus Anglo-American Pop, and then write a paper comparing a Filipino pop song with an Anglo counterpart.

The semester dinner has a different format, contrasting Filipino dishes with foreign counterparts. Past dinners have compared Filipino dishes with Spanish, Mexican, and so on. The purpose of all these studies is to figure out if there

is a “Filipino style.” Once again, the students are divided into teams, working with an expert in a specific field.

While the emphasis in “Introduction to Cultural Heritage” is on “significance,” the focus in “Culture and the Senses” shifts to “multisensorial appreciation.” Inspired by the growing emphasis on the sensuous in sociology and anthropology, students are asked to write vivid essays that use metaphors to accurately convey an experience.

EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD

Since 2009, the Cultural Heritage Studies Program has organized a three-week field school, during



the Intersession, which brings students out of campus and into a particular location like Tayabas, Bacayon, Kalibo, Puerto Princesa, Nasugbu-Balayan, and Carcar. Working in teams, they document a particular form of heritage in that location, share a report to the local government and to stakeholders in the community, and reflect on what form of cultural heritage they would like to see conserved in their own community of birth or residence and why.

For example, at Nasugbu-Balayan, one team documented the beautiful 19th-early 20th century houses along Calle Antorcha in Balayan, while another documented local food recipes. A third documented the Luwa, a song of praise to the Blessed Mother in rural villages. A fourth developed a multi-sensorial tour script that highlights the specificity of Balayan and Nasugbu.

The outputs from these activities can be used by the local government and stakeholders for community development plans, as teaching aids in schools, and even as tour scripts for local guides.

DEEPER APPRECIATION OF FILIPINO CULTURE

The Cultural Heritage Studies Program has succeeded in giving Ateneo students a better

appreciation of our people's achievements in various domains. As Claire Amador, who has been deeply involved in tourism, said, "*Hindi pala baduy maging Pilipino*" (it's not tacky to be Pilipino).

Some students have actively incorporated the appreciation for heritage into their own careers. For example, aside from becoming a lawyer with specialization in heritage concerns, Kate Tantuico became a practicing archaeologist; Paolo Palanca and Christine Tiu set up their own companies to help the ailing gold tambourine industry of Ilocos Sur by popularizing its jewelry among young Filipinos.

Angeli Nasser was inspired by the discussions on food to become a certified chef, with training in Paris; Aidel Belamide joined three of our field schools and has become an enthusiastic proponent of cultural heritage in Silang, Cavite, where he serves as vice mayor; Kara Garilao has become a recognized authority on heritage and community development.

What wonders a multi sensorial experience of heritage can do! •

Renowned anthropologist and cultural historian Dr Fernando "Butch" Nakpil Zialcita is Professor Emeritus at the Ateneo de Manila Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

Launched in the late 1990s
as a bold experiment,
Ateneo Fine Arts has grown
from a handful of students
into a thriving community
of over 500—shaping a legacy
of imagination, leadership,
and cultural impact.

Ateneo de Manila's Department of Fine Arts

marks 25 years

of shaping artists, thinkers, and leaders

SMILE M INDIAS



The Department of Fine Arts at Ateneo de Manila University began as a vision in the late 1990s. It wasn't merely about establishing a building or a program; it was about creating a space where creativity could thrive, and students could be trained not only as artists but as critical thinkers who use their craft to shape society.

This vision was carefully nurtured by a group of distinguished artists and scholars, including National Artist for Theater Design Salvador Bernal, Rofel Brion, Susan Evangelista, Doreen Fernandez, Rene Javellana SJ, Danton Remoto, Soledad Reyes, Fernando Zialcita, and Eric Torres, under the leadership of Dr Leovino Ma. Garcia and Dr Ricardo Abad. Together, they laid the foundation for what has grown into one of the most dynamic departments within Ateneo de Manila.

In those early years, the Fine Arts Program offered degrees in Creative Writing, Theater Arts, Art Management, and, eventually, Information Design. While modest at first—with fewer than ten graduates—the department quickly grew as the need for a space dedicated to nurturing the arts became more evident. Driven by passion and vision, this early momentum has led to the flourishing of the department as it exists today.



This year marks the 25th anniversary of Ateneo Fine Arts—a moment to reflect on how far it has come since its inception. Over the past quarter century, the department has grown into a vibrant academic home for over 500 students. This anniversary celebrates the work that has shaped the journey of Fine Arts and celebrates its enduring legacy of creativity, critical thinking, and social engagement.

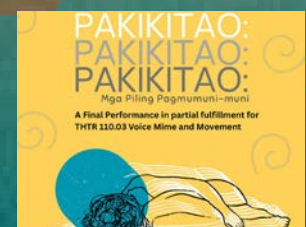
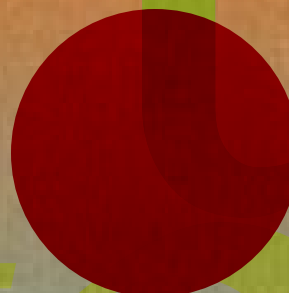
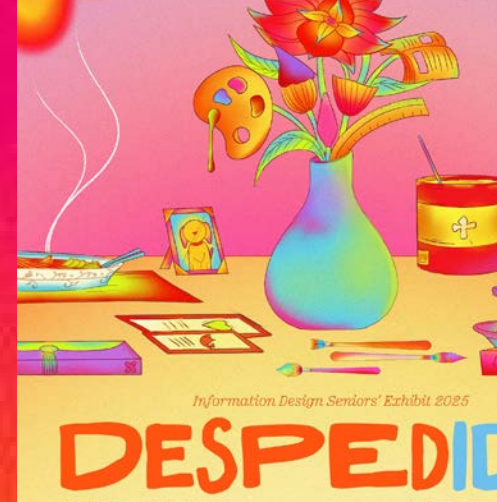
GROWTH INTO A DEPARTMENT


By 2016, the Fine Arts Program had expanded in both size and scope. With the growing population of students, it became clear that the program needed to be elevated to a full department. Under the leadership of Program Director Martin Villanueva, the proposal to establish the Department of Fine Arts was submitted. This transition was not just about meeting practical needs, like resources and full-time faculty—it reflected the department's evolution into a space that fully supported the diverse forms of artistic expression in its programs.

The department has been assessed and affirmed by both PAASCU (Level 1 accreditation) and the ASEAN University Network (AUN), reinforcing its standing as an institution that continues to evolve while staying true to its mission of fostering creativity and intellectual rigor.

Ateneo Fine Arts has always been more than a group of courses—it's a vibrant community of students, faculty, and alumni dedicated to advancing the role of the arts in society. Its influence extends beyond the classroom, contributing to the development of cultural







workers, award-winning writers, designers, and theater artists, all of whom continue to shape the Philippine arts scene.

ATENEO FINE ARTS TODAY

In 2017, the Department of Fine Arts found a permanent home in Areté, Ateneo's hub for creativity and innovation. Areté was the result of years of work by the Ateneo community, including Fine Arts faculty and former chairs who helped shape both its vision and design. For early leaders like Dr Ricardo Abad, Rene Javellana SJ, Benilda Santos, and Dr Jerry Respeto, the hub's completion marked the fulfillment of a long-held dream to provide the arts a space of their own.

At the heart of Fine Arts are its students. Across Creative Writing, Theater Arts, Art Management, and Information Design, they consistently demonstrate that art is not only a craft, but a response to the world around them. Their projects take on issues like climate change, inequality, and identity—not just to express, but to question, challenge, and propose new ways forward.

Faculty members model this ethos in their practice. Guelan Luarca, Missy Maramara, Glenn Mas, Bianca Ma-alat, Kaisa Aquino, and Alfred Marasigan, among others, continue to blur the lines between teaching and making. Their work spans performance, research, theory, and production—bringing into the classroom the rigor and relevance they bring to the stage, studio, or page.

The Department's ability to form leaders is perhaps most clearly seen in how some of its own graduates have come to steer its course. Martin Villanueva (BFA CW 2008) and Smile Indias (BFA ID 2010), have returned not just to teach but to help shape the department's future—a quiet testament to a community that cultivates commitment, creativity, and care over time.

THE LEGACY OF OUR ALUMNI

In a world of shifting social, political, and ecological landscapes, Fine Arts students are not standing by—they are participating, responding, and creating.

The impact of Fine Arts extends well beyond graduation. FA alumni continue to contribute to the arts and other sectors in meaningful ways. From award-winning writers and directors to designers shaping the future of communication, our alumni are leaving a lasting impact on society.

A prime example is Jenica Dizon-Mountford, (BFA ID 2013). Jenica's work with Waves for Water Philippines, an organization dedicated to providing clean water to underserved communities, has earned her significant recognition. She was recently named one of the 2024 TOYM awardees for her contributions to sustainability and social impact.

Jenica's story is just one of many. Numerous alumni use their skills to address social, environmental, and cultural issues. Their careers reflect the Department's broader mission to produce graduates who are prepared to contribute meaningfully to society, no matter their field.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Looking ahead, Ateneo Fine Arts remains committed to equipping students to respond to the ever-changing landscape of the arts, as it strives to ensure that its students remain at the forefront, using their art to make a difference.

In a world where art can sometimes feel like a luxury, the Department of Fine Arts remains steadfast in creating space for the young to take risks, think critically, and develop an unyielding pursuit of truth.

Art, at its core, is a space for reflection, reimagining, and repair—it invites us to slow down, ask the important questions, and find meaning in the noise. While skill is valued, what the world truly seeks are visionaries—those who can marry innovation with ethics, and beauty with justice. As the department continues to evolve, its mission stays clear: to nurture artists who will challenge the status quo and contribute to shaping a more just, compassionate, and creative world. •

Joi Marie Angelica “Smile” M Indias is Assistant Professor of Information Design and Chair at the Ateneo de Manila Department of Fine Arts.

TOP

Nicole Revel records a conversation with the singer of tales Māsinu Intarāy, in a *kālang bānwa* in Tataran Island, Palawan, c1995.

BOTTOM

The singer Usuy takes a break between two episodes of *Kudaman*, Tabud, Palawan, 1972.

For over fifty years, Nicole Revel listened. From forest clearings to coastal villages, she recorded the sung stories of our people—epics that carry law, ritual, ancestry, and breath. Now, after years of silence, **epics.ateneo.edu** returns: a digital collection reimaged for a new generation of listeners and scholars.

Returning *to* songs *of* Memory

epics.ateneo.edu,
a digital home for
Philippine epics
and ballads—rebuilt
and renewed.

ALI FIGUEROA



In 1970, in a *kālang bānwa*, a big bamboo house, Usuy, a shaman and the most famous singer in the forested highlands of southern Palawan, began to chant.

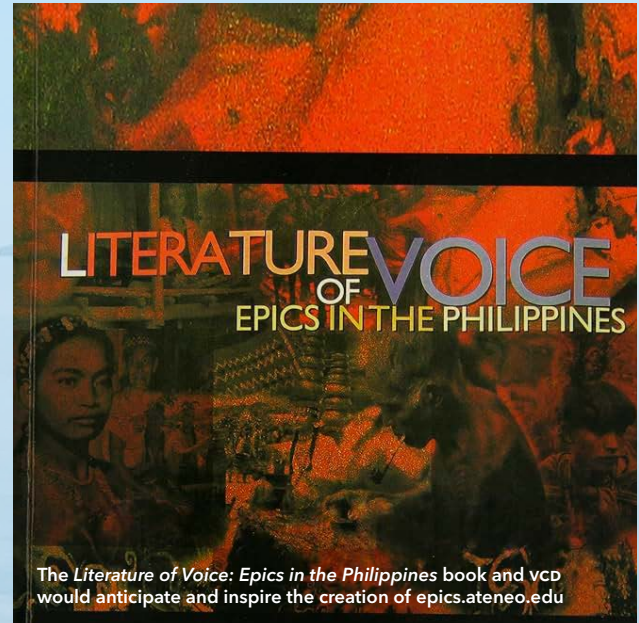
Nicole Revel, then a young linguist from France, sat and listened. The chant was called *Kudaman*—a *tutul*, an epic. Usuy sang of a man named Kudaman who journeys across many worlds—guided by dreams, transformed by trials, and called to restore balance in a vast cosmos. This was not just a folk tale. It was a cosmology and an ethos. To hear it was to be drawn into a world held together by song.

That first night in Palawan, listening to *Kudaman*, marked the beginning of a lifelong mission rooted in listening, care, and shared presence. Over the next five decades, Revel would work and walk with singers of tales, elders, knowledgeable persons, and communities across sixteen cultural and linguistic groups in the Philippines to discover epic genres across the Philippines—*darangen*, *hudhud*, *iraraley*, *kata-kata*, *kissaq*, *lingon tudbulul*,

maman, *sugidanon*, *tutul*, *ulaging*, *ullalim*.

They recorded performances, transcribed and translated verses, and preserved our literature of voice. What began with one field recording has grown into one of the most expansive and carefully documented collections of oral literature in the world.

In 1992, with the support of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French



Embassy in the Philippines, a collection of audio, visuals, and texts began to form. This aligned with UNESCO's global advocacy for safeguarding intangible heritage. Revel had written to the UNESCO French National Commission as early as 1987, proposing ways to document and preserve ephemeral but essential cultural expressions. Her work was folded into the larger international program, "Integral Study of the Silk Roads, Roads of Dialogue," and was tied to over a decade of research at the Centre de Recherche sur l'Oralité (CRO), Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO).

A turning point came in 2000, when Ateneo de Manila University hosted the landmark conference *Literature of Voice: Epics in the Philippines*. Its papers and presentations were later compiled into a book, accompanied by a vcd of live performances. This combination of voice, image, and text would anticipate and inspire the creation of the epics.ateneo.edu website.

Meanwhile, from 2001 to 2007, Revel would create and teach a joint course on intangible heritage in Ateneo with Dr Fernando Zialcita (sociology and anthropology) and Dr Leovino Garcia (philosophy). In 2007, for her decades of work and research, Ateneo de Manila University



Nicole Revel explores the community's daily life as she studies the *hudhud* in Bayninan, Ifugao in 1983

granted her the degree of Doctor of Humanities, *Honoris Causa*.

The epics collection continued to grow, and then university president Fr Bienvenido Nebres SJ offered to house it in Ateneo. His vision was to make the epics accessible both nationally and internationally. This vision came to life in 2011, when Ateneo hosted a second international

The conference also marked the formal launch of epics.ateneo.edu. Digital humanities had not yet taken root in the Philippines, but epics.ateneo.edu dared to imagine epics not simply preserved, but alive—embodied and heard online.

That site lived online for several years, but would eventually fall silent. As web technologies evolved, sections—built largely on legacy formats like

Adobe Flash—ceased to function. By 2020, much of its content had effectively disappeared from public access, prompting the need for careful reconstruction.

That work began in earnest in 2020, following the prompting and encouragement of Fr Nebres. After groundwork had been laid, Dr Revel flew to Manila and Palawan from February to April

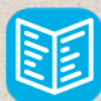


Epic chanters, local experts, cultural workers, and scholars at the Songs of Memory conference, 20 January 2011

gathering, organized with the CNRS (Centre national de la recherche scientifique/French National Centre for Scientific Research) and supported by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Embassy. The conference *Songs of Memory* and the subsequent publication, *Songs of Memory in Islands of Southeast Asia* placed the Philippine collection in conversation with parallel traditions across the globe.

2023 and from September to October 2024. During these visits, she worked closely with Ali Figueroa, of the University Marketing and Communications Office, who also worked on *Literature of Voice* in 2000. With the assistance of Meyanne Plamenio-Cortezano and archivist Lina Trinidad, they rebuilt the site, updating its interface and information architecture, while preserving the layered richness of the original materials. Each file was migrated and reindexed—from thousands of pages and photographs to audio and video recordings. As editor, Revel ensured fidelity to the original fieldwork and material, while adding new content.

The new site, completed in September 2024, and launched in April 2025, was made possible by the continuing commitment of Ateneo, with the stewardship of Dr Maria Luz C Vilches, Vice President for Higher Education, whose voice has graced the English version of the collection's introductory video from its inception.





THE SITE, AND ITS RETURN

Today, the restored site offers not only access, but orientation—an invitation to approach Philippine epics as living traditions shaped by voice, ritual, and time. The collection includes:

- 8,091 pages of text in 16 languages, in 34 printed volumes
- 74 articles
- 2,028 photographs
- 54 videos
- 240 cassette tapes
- 53 optical discs
- 8 external hard drives with the original website, digital collection, and raw audio files
- 3 backups of the 2024 site stored on SSDs

Materials are organized by cultural group. Each section features maps, videos, articles, chants, and photographs, drawn from the physical collection housed at the Rizal Library's Pardo de Tavera Special Collection and Library in Ateneo de Manila.



EPICS IN ATHENS AND THE WORLD STAGE

In April 2025, Dr Revel presented the updated site at the International Conference on Epic Studies in Greece, hosted by the Chinese School of Classical Studies at Athens. Her presentation emphasized that epics are not relics, but voices in motion.

Digital preservation, she added, is not a substitute for performance, but a way to hold space for memory. The Philippine collection stood alongside African, Asian, and European traditions—a reminder that storytelling is one of humanity's oldest and most vital technologies. Epics are stories, yes—but they also sing of ritual, kinship, law, ecology, and practical knowledge. They speak of migrations, promises, transformations, and returns. To perform them and to preserve them is to remember—and to hold a world together.

VISIT THE SITE AND JOIN THE MEMORY

To be clear, the relaunch of epics.ateneo.edu is not a resurrection. The epics have not died. What returns is their ability to reach a new and wider audience. The site invites students, researchers, teachers, and community members to listen, to learn, and perhaps to add.

Dr Nicole Revel extends a personal invitation: "I keep hoping that Filipino scholars and local knowledgeable persons will not only consult and refer to this collection, but will enrich it." She offers her collaboration as editor to help integrate new contributions—whether in the form of a recorded chant, a translation, or an article. This way, the site remains open, not as a finished archive, but as a shared act of remembering and renewal.

True to this spirit, Dr Revel has recently completed the English transcription and finished the recording of the Palawan *tultul*, *Limbuhanän*. An undertaking she began in Pinukulan, Palawan, in March 1971 has come full circle during her visit to Tabud in March 2023, 52 years later. It will soon be available online. •

epics.ateneo.edu is now live. You may register via your ateneo.edu or other Google account. For assistance, email epics.rl@ateneo.edu.



A page from Josh's sketchbook, drawn during his Grade 11 retreat at the Notre Dame de Vie Retreat House in Novaliches. As he sketched the statues around him, he reflected: "Anything can be a form of prayer."

In one extraordinary year, student leader, honor student, and debater Josh Ong Ante was called to create three liturgical works of art for the Ateneo community. His story is one of quiet growth and the power of art to reflect grace.

An Artist's Journey, Thus Far

PAUL DAZA & JOANNA RUIZ

It is May 2025, the academic year at an end, and 16-year-old Josh Ong-Ante of II-Tsuji has had a big year. He was class president, got first honors, found a life-changing love for debating, and, quite unexpectedly, became a liturgical artist.

With requests from the university's chaplains and offices for religious artwork coming in throughout the year, Josh realized the need to "lock in" on his creative work and hone his technical skills, all while balancing a full load of academics and extracurriculars.

"At the start of the year, I treated art a lot like a hobby. But it's more than that to me now. I feel like it's an integral part of my life because of the work I've done and because of the opportunities that I have been given." How did this change come about, and what creative opportunities have shaped Josh's journey, such that "art is synonymous with who I am now," as he says?

The prequel is set three years ago, in 2022, when a 13-year-old, Grade 9 Josh was requested by his aunt, then University's Office of Mission and Identity (OMI) director Dr Miriam Delos Santos, to illustrate the cover of a book of COVID reflections she was about to publish. The artwork

depicted the Church of the Gesù during the COVID lockdown in a breezy, impressionistic watercolor style, with the Bellarmine Field's well-known migratory egrets in the foreground.

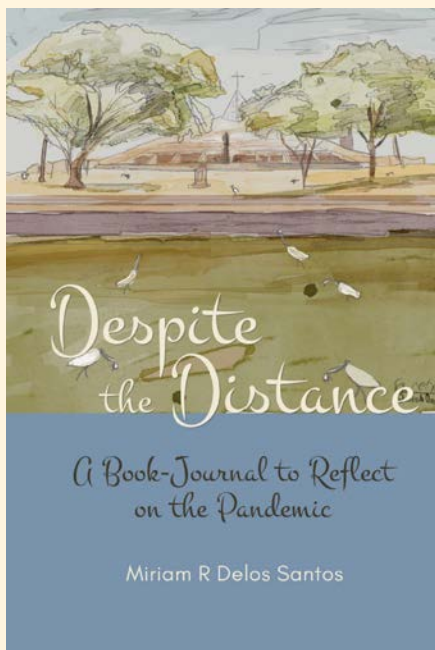
Dr Delos Santos was later able to present the book, *Despite the Distance: A Book-Journal to Reflect on*

the Pandemic, to the late Pope Francis in Rome. The affirmation of having his work seen by the Pope was just the push the young artist—who had been about to quit making art—needed to continue. "Before that, I was just really doing art for myself. That gave me a very personal connection to making Catholic art, to have this figure that I look up to acknowledge my work. It made me feel really close to my religion and to the Pope. It's the reason I continue to work on my art."

Cut to mid-2024 when, impressed with the *Despite the Distance* cover and Josh's other works, Church of the Gesù

rector Fr Raymund Benedict "RB" Hizon SJ asked the incoming Grade 11 student to create a 4 feet x 12 feet banner for the Solemnity of St Ignatius of Loyola in July 2024, giving him free rein to visualize Ignatius in any way he wanted. "I was very excited to do something for the Gesù," recalls Josh. On vacation with his family abroad and learning a new digital painting program, Josh worked nights and completed the banner in less than three weeks.

The resulting large scale digital work zoomed in on the vulnerable side of Ignatius, normally portrayed as the determined soldier of Christ who led a hardy battalion of missionaries. Inspired by a short scene in the Jesuit Communications film "Ignacio de Loyola," Josh painted Ignatius convalescing from his cannonball wound, at the moment before the suffering soldier discovered

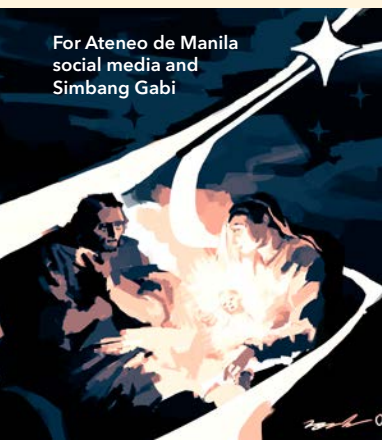




the books that would change his life's direction and mission: *Lives of the Saints* and *The Life of Jesus*. In his weakened state, Ignatius is lightly and gently cradled by Christ himself.

The positive reception for the painting of Ignatius led to more requests for Josh's work. Just a few months after the unveiling of the Ignatius banner, a second banner by Josh was installed at the Church of the Gesù for the Halloween/ All Saints' Day/All Souls' Day observance,

another commission from Fr RB Hizon. The banner shows an Atenean dancing with a statue of Mary. As with the Ignatius piece, Josh emphasizes the humanity in divine figures, and the divinity of humans. "By showing the Atenean holding Mama Mary's hand, I hope to convey that saints are not 'untouchable' and that we can be on equal footing with them. This is shown through having both the Atenean and Mama Mary statue in the focal



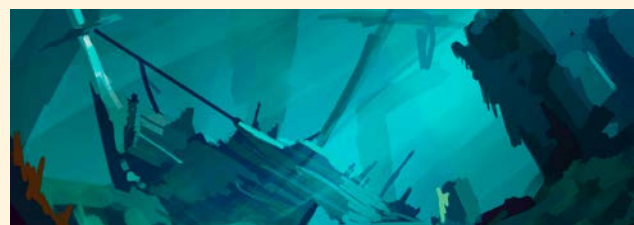
point, neither one outshining the other but instead engaged in a graceful, balanced dance."

With these two banners under his belt, and other work for the university's social media and his batch's prom from December 2024 to March 2025, Josh found himself refining his creative process and painting techniques. While the Ignatius banner took around 40 hours to complete, succeeding work proceeded more quickly, as a result. While all his Ateneo works were created digitally, he has also been painting on canvas.

The most recent work created by Josh is a banner commissioned for the University's traditional Way of the Cross by ASHS Chaplain Fr Noel "Weng" Bava SJ, inspired by the theme "a pilgrimage from disappointment to fulfillment," which is in turn inspired by Pope Francis' Bull of Indiction for the Jubilee Year of Hope, *Spes Non Confundit*. The resulting artwork, now semi-permanently displayed at the ASHS Gonzaga Chapel, reminds one of the Ignatius artwork in its coloring and its use of light and shadow, reminiscent of the Italian master Caravaggio's paintings. As with the other banners, this bears his signature impressionistic touch, with features coming together not through detailed brushwork, but evoked through precisely placed broad strokes.

Thematically, the banner features "a balance between Jesus' divinity and people's inherent dignity." It shows Jesus walking toward judgment at the hands of Pontius Pilate, with a group of people meant to portray those in need of hope. "They are being uplifted and led by Jesus. The central light hitting Jesus hits them as well. I wanted to show that they are worthy of being seen."

Surprisingly, Josh shares that the positioning and movement of the characters were inspired by interpretative dance. "There's a grace to dance, even if it is depicting suffering," he explains. As a bonus, the work, which is displayed in portrait



orientation, can also be viewed as a landscape piece, giving it another possible interpretation. Although he has his own themes for his pieces, “mostly I just want people to interpret my pieces for themselves.”

On a personal note, Josh notes that at the time he was creating the piece, he “needed that hope” as well, what with the many pressures he was experiencing. But, hearing Vice President for Basic Education Fr Jose Mari “Jonjee” Sumpaico SJ discussing his work during a homily revived his hope and made him feel seen.

Seeing photos of people praying in the Church of the Gesù in the presence of his Ignatius banner in July 2024 also provided affirmation and inspiration. “That I am able to help people with their prayer is something so dear to me,” he says. “It feels like the culmination of my

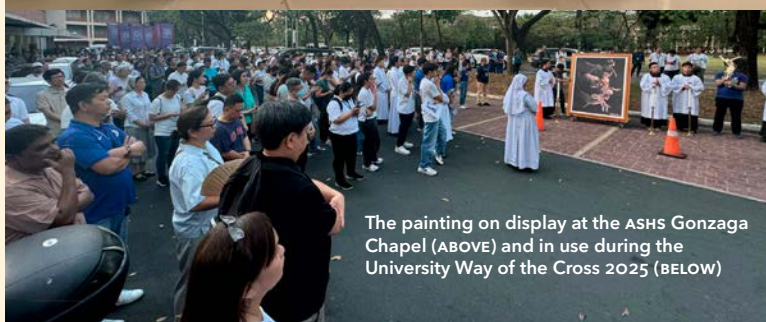


work, and the culmination of my dream to have my work displayed in a church.” He recounts childhood masses at Santuario de San Jose in Greenhills, San Juan and Christ the King Church in Greenmeadows, Quezon City, where he was impressed by the artwork and statues displayed around the churches. Thus was born the dream fulfilled a decade hence.

Reflecting on his evolution as an artist, Josh shares, “Me last year would have never been able to take on this piece. Grade 10 me would be intimidated by Grade 11 me.” Apart from his improved skills and more streamlined work process, Josh credits a seemingly unrelated activity as another factor in his artistic growth—his involvement in debate. “Debate has really improved my art a lot because it got me thinking about social issues. It made me conscious of what I want as a person, what I want in terms of social change.”

This reflective stance naturally extends to the artist’s personal encounter with his own faith. “I’m a teenager, so of course I will have my questions and struggles about my religion,” he exclaims. Asked how he would like to depict Christ in future works, he replies, “I want to depict Jesus in a way that is not conventional but is still full of meaning. It’s time to look at new things, new concepts, new ideas. I try to bring these as a young person.”

What a year it has been, indeed. We look forward to what Grade 12 Josh will have in store! •



The painting on display at the ASHS Gonzaga Chapel (ABOVE) and in use during the University Way of the Cross 2025 (BELOW)

RESEARCH, CREATIVE WORK, AND INNOVATION

2025 University Scholarly Work Awards fete Ateneo's culture of innovation and research



CREATIVE
WORK
AWARDS



SCHOLARLY
WORK
AWARDS

IN 2025, ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY ONCE AGAIN

celebrated the depth and range of its intellectual and artistic community through two events: the University Scholarly Work Awards (USWA) and the Creative Work Awards (CWA). Together, they honored excellence in inquiry and imagination and affirmed Ateneo's ongoing commitment to knowledge, creativity, and service.

CREATIVE WORK AWARDS

INQUIRY, PROGRESSIVENESS, AND TRANSFORMATION

Held on 2 May 2025, this year's Creative Work Awards recognized the outstanding achievements of Ateneo's faculty and staff in the performing, visual, and screen arts. The roster of honorees reflected the diversity of contemporary Filipino expression—from libretto and lighting design to curatorial practice, orchestral performance, and independent film.

Spanning two academic years, the awardees' works were as daring as they were disciplined—unfolding across genres, platforms, and publics. They confronted questions of identity and memory, of resistance and renewal, often pushing formal boundaries in the process—all while remaining rooted in academic rigors and formation.

The CWA also marked a quiet shift in Ateneo's approach to artistic recognition, aligning more intentionally with contemporary values: community engagement, interdisciplinary risk-taking, and a deeper acknowledgment of artistic labor as intellectual labor. These recognitions reasserted what has always been true in Ateneo: that the arts are not a supplement to formation, but a mode of critical thinking, ethical vision, and cultural transformation.

SCHOLARLY WORK AWARDS

A CULTURE OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Now in its 24th year, the University Scholarly Work Awards celebrated faculty, staff, and students across the university for their research, scholarship, and real-world impact. The 2025 awards—held at the Areté roofdeck on 11 April—highlighted the continuing rise in scholarly output, with Scopus-indexed publications growing 18% from the previous year to a record 453 in 2024.

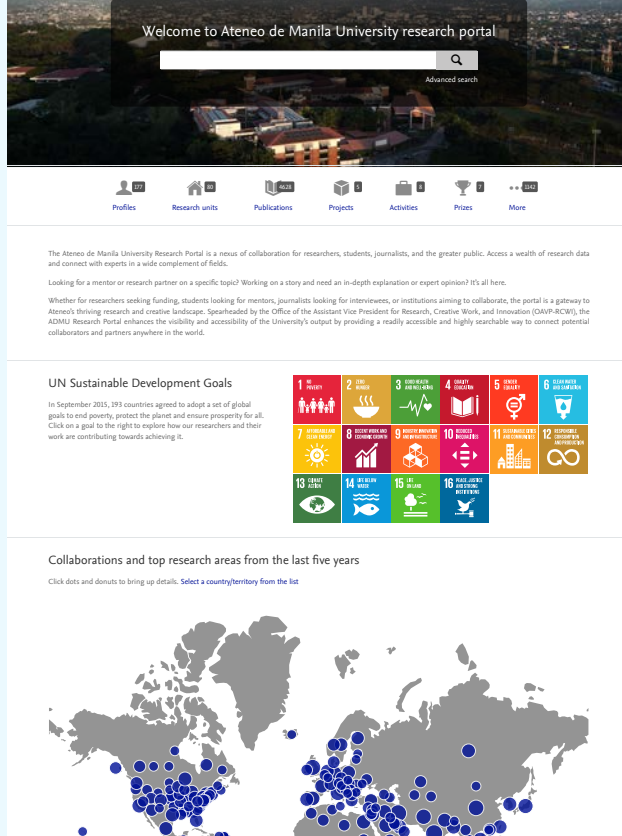
In her opening remarks, Dr Maria Luz C Vilchez, Vice President for Higher Education, noted, "We no longer prompt our people to publish. It is part of our joy as members of the Ateneo community to share our work with the world." The spirit of that statement manifested in numbers: 530 publications recognized, 243 student and research assistant honorees, and a 59% increase in faculty awardees.

The Outstanding Scholarly Work Awards (OSWA) spotlighted research that addressed urgent national and global concerns—from climate-driven disease modeling to education policy, electoral reform, and cognitive development in children. The Lux in Domino Awards, meanwhile, honored scholarship exemplifying social engagement—from participatory theater for peacebuilding to studies on teacher well-being and ecological resilience.

Special commendations were also awarded to individuals and departments that led in patents, utility models, international collaborations, and publication growth.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OF ATENEAN RESEARCH

A digital milestone was unveiled during the program: the launch of research.ateneo.edu,



a portal for accessing scholarly and creative work, designed as a nexus of collaboration for researchers, journalists, students, and the public.

ONE MISSION, MANY FORMS

Whether expressed through choreography or computation, installation or policy study, the work of this year's honorees affirms Ateneo's mission to form minds and imaginations that seek truth, serve others, and build a more just and creative world. These awards are more than recognition—they are reminders of the many ways knowledge moves: through rhythm, rigor, and the refusal to look away.

At the Scholarly Work Awards, University President Fr Roberto C Yap SJ, thanked the awardees for heeding Pope Francis' call to "fan the flame of hope... and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future, with an open spirit, a trusting heart, and far-sighted vision." He also reminded the community that "There is no magic here—only deep curiosity, sheer tenacity, confident boldness, steely resolve, open-mindedness, and goodness of heart—qualities that our awardees possess in abundance."

Together, these qualities define not only the achievements of this year's honorees, but the spirit of scholarship and creativity at Ateneo. •

2025 ATENEO CREATIVE WORK AWARDEES

PERFORMING ARTS • THEATER

MICHAEL COROZA

LIBRETTIST: *Florante at Laura*

DANIEL ROAN CORTEZANO

LIGHTS DESIGNER: *Uncle Jane; Zsazsa Zaturnnah the Musical... Yun Lang!; Nekropolis; Pride Plays (Unica Hijas, Laro); Sarita series (Labor Room, Matira ang Matibay, Commonwealth of Virginia); Fake; Elias at Salome; Ang Kasal ni Figaro; La Bohème; The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee; Pingkian; Medea; Othello; Before Brabant*

ARIEL DICCON

LEAD ACTOR: *Kung Paano Ako Naging Ikatlong Miss Fiesta Golden Sunshine Barang-Gay San Marinos*

JOMAR EMPAYNADO

READER: *Mga Kuwentong Jataka: Ang Haring Matsing*

JOHN CARLO GLORIA

READER: *Mga Kuwentong Jataka: 'Uling' ni Impo*

SHARMAINE HERNANDEZ

READER: *Mga Kuwentong Jataka: Ang Jackal na Nagligtas sa Leon*

JOI MARIE ANGELICA INDIAS

FEATURED PERFORMER: *Labor Room*

YOLANDO JAMENDANG

READER: *Mga Kuwentong Jataka: Ang Puso ng Matsing*

MARK BENEDICT F LIM

TRANSLATOR: *Ang Jackal na Nakaligtas sa Leon; Ang Madaldal na Pagong; Ang mga Nakakita sa Punong Judas; Ang Mga Lawin at ang Kanilang Mga Kaibigan*

MELISSA VERA MARAMARA

DIRECTOR, LEAD PERFORMER, AND LEAD ACTOR: *O; Uncle Jane; The Pact*

GLENN MAS

LEAD ACTOR: *Sari-Saring Soneto: An Evening of Shakespearean Sonnets in English and Filipino*

ARKEL MENDOZA

FEATURED PERFORMER: *Sa Tahanan ng Aking Ama*

OLIVER JOHN QUINTANA

LEAD ACTOR: *Sarita: Ang Trilohiya ng mga Sinaring Katawan*

JERRY RESPETO

LEAD ACTOR, DIRECTOR, AND TRANSLATOR: *Sari-Saring Soneto, Sa Tahanan ng Aking Ama*

CORAZON L SANTOS

READER: *Mga Kuwentong Jataka/Jatacae Series: Uling ni Impo*

JETHRO NIÑO TENORIO

DIRECTOR AND LEAD PERFORMER: *Sarita: Trilohiya ng mga Sinaring Katawan; Sa Tahanan ng Aking Ama*

ANDREA ANNE TRINIDAD

READER: *Kuwentong Jataka: Ang mga Prinsipe at ang Engkanto ng Tubig*

FREDERICK TUVIERA

PRODUCTION DESIGNER: *Tartuffe; Zsazsa Zaturnnah, The Musical... Yun Lang!*

CHARLES IVAN YEE

DIRECTOR AND SET DESIGNER: *Nekropolis; Silver Lining; Sari-Saring Soneto*

PERFORMING ARTS • MUSIC

ANTONIO MARIA P CAYABYAB

CONDUCTOR: *Florante at Laura*;
Philippines-Türkiye Friendship Day Concert (Orchestra)

HIROKO NAGAI

LEAD INSTRUMENTALIST: *Circle of Dreams Concert*;
Pearl of May Concert; *The Listening Biennial 2023*;
Stories of Battles: From Dannoura to Gaza

VISUAL ARTS

KARL FREDRICK CASTRO

SOLO EXHIBITION (ABROAD): *Dream after Dream, Expo '70 Tour*
NON-SOLO EXHIBITION (LOCAL MUSEUM):
50 Years of Philippine Design and Beyond, Line of Sight

DANIEL ROAN CORTEZANO

NON-SOLO EXHIBITION (LOCAL MUSEUM):
Living with Water, Sinag 2023: Tuloy ang Palabas;
SOLO EXHIBITION (LOCAL): *Dagitab/Digital: Banaag and*
Earth Day Installation, Dagitab/Digital: Sikat

PAULINE BIANCA MA-ALAT

NON-SOLO CURATORIAL (LOCAL):
The People's Museum of Climate Justice

ALFRED BENEDICT MARASIGAN

SOLO EXHIBITION (ABROAD): *A Heritage of Captivity*;
Solo Exhibition: Conferences 10-11 / RE-POSING;
RESISTANCE, RESPIRATION, RESOLUTION

EDGAR CALABIA SAMAR

NON-SOLO EXHIBITION (LOCAL MUSEUM):
Walang Walang Binatbat

JOSEPH SEDFREY SANTIAGO

SOLO CURATORIAL (LOCAL): *Bulda: Contemporary Itneg*
Textile Art, Genesis; *Non-solo Curatorial (local), Saulog*

SCREEN ARTS

GLENN MAS

SUBTITLIST: *The Gospel of the Beast*

ALVIN YAPAN

DIRECTOR: *Talahib*

2025 OUTSTANDING SCHOLARLY WORK AWARDEES

ATENEO GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Understanding Adoption of Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) During a Health Emergency: An Analysis of EMR Usage Logs from Rural Health Facilities in the Philippines

ATENEO SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Corruption Risk and Political Dynasties: Exploring the Links Using Public Procurement Data in the Philippines

ATENEO SCHOOL OF LAW

Parrying Amendments: The Philippines' Multi-Tiered System of Constitutional Change

ATENEO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Projecting Temperature-related Dengue Burden in the Philippines under Various Socioeconomic Pathway Scenarios

GOKONGWEI BROTHER

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND LEARNING DESIGN

English Language Education and Educational Policy in the Philippines

JOHN GOKONGWEI SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

Building Sustainable Organizations Online: How Leaders Embed Sustainability into Organizational Culture in Virtual Contexts

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

Postcolonial Education and National Identity: An Arendtian Re-Imagination

SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

The Contributions of Motor Skill Proficiency to Cognitive and Social Development in Early Childhood

DR ROSITA G. LEONG SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Crisis Geographies from Above and Below: Constructing Globality during the COVID-19 Pandemic

2025 LUX IN DOMINO AWARDEES

BRIDGING CULTURAL DIVIDES

Intergroup Political Theater: Transforming Social Representations Among Peace Leaders in Contested Territories

EDUCATION REFORM AND TRANSFORMATION

"The People Deserve Better Governance": Examining the Letters of Filipino High School Students to the Next President of the Philippines

SPECIAL CITATION: *Navigating around Marginalizing Complexities: The Case of Mathematics Teachers in the Philippines*

INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

Projecting Temperature-related Dengue Burden in the Philippines under Various Socioeconomic Pathway Scenarios

SPECIAL CITATION: *Baseline Assessment and Early Effects of a Network of Marine Protected Areas*

UNIVERSAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Determining an Optimal Case Definition using Mid-upper Arm Circumference With or Without Weight for Age to Identify Childhood Wasting in the Philippines

SPECIAL CITATION: *Teachers as Health Workers in the Philippines*

2025 UNIVERSITY SCHOLARLY WORK AWARDS • SPECIAL COMMENDATIONS

MOST PATENTS GRANTED (2021)

Dr Erwin Enriquez • Department of Chemistry • 2 patents

MOST UTILITY MODELS REGISTERED (2021-2022)

Dr Fabian Dayrit • Department of Chemistry • 3 models/year

MOST CATEGORY A PUBLICATIONS (2024)

Department of Psychology • 43 Category A publications

MOST PUBLICATIONS ACROSS ALL CATEGORIES (2024)

Department of Mathematics • 83 publications

MOST SCOPUS-INDEXED

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS (2024)

Dr Rosita G Leong School of Social Sciences
32 co-authored works

GREATEST IMPROVEMENT

IN TOTAL PUBLICATIONS (2023-2024)

Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health
260% increase—from 10 in 2023 to 36 in 2024

RESEARCH, CREATIVE WORK, AND INNOVATION

Memes improve learning and attitude towards science



READ THE PAPER
ON ARCHIUM



Sample memes that were successfully used to teach biology to Grade 11 high school students. The students not only scored better in tests, they also said they felt more confident in their newfound ability to grasp and use scientific concepts. REDDIT.COM, TWIMG.COM, IMGFLIP.COM, AND PINIMG.COM

ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY RESEARCHERS HAVE

found that using internet memes –those humorous, image-based posts so familiar to today's digital natives– to teach science can significantly improve learning outcomes for senior high school students.

The study involved over 200 Grade 11 students from private high schools in the Philippines, focusing on those in non-STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) academic tracks who are still required to take biology. These students were divided into two groups: the control class received traditional instruction without memes, while the experimental class was taught using lessons infused with memes.

Over the course of five weeks, both groups studied challenging topics like cellular division and genetics. But while one group relied on standard textbooks and lectures, the other explored the same material through memes—both as teaching tools and as creative assignments. Students in the experimental group were encouraged to create their own science-themed memes, helping them engage more actively with the content.

To measure the effectiveness of the lessons, the researchers gave students a 30-item test before and after instruction to assess their understanding of the material. After the lessons, students also

completed surveys to gauge their attitudes toward science and their confidence in learning biology.

The results were striking: students exposed to meme-based lessons scored 21 percent higher on average than their peers in the traditional classes—earning 21.46 correct answers on the post-test, compared to 17.74 for the control group. More than just boosting scores, the use of memes helped students feel more confident in understanding scientific concepts. They also reported reduced anxiety related to the subject and that the learning process became more enjoyable and memorable.

According to the researchers, memes have the potential to make lessons more approachable: simplifying complex topics, adding humor, and making the material feel more relevant to everyday life. By allowing students to create their own meme content, the study also encouraged critical thinking and a deeper processing of information.

For educators this study offers a fresh and positive way to connect with Gen Z learners. It shows how digital culture can be thoughtfully integrated into pedagogy, transforming classrooms and breaking down barriers between students and science. In an age of ever-shifting attention spans and media habits, tools like memes may just be what today's learners need to feel more at home in the world of ideas. •

Alyanna Nicole Carlos and Dr Emmanuel Delocado of the Ateneo de Manila University School of Science and Engineering's Department of Biology and the Ateneo Institute of Sustainability published their findings in the *Asian Journal of Biology Education*. It also received the 2024 SOSE Week Special Citation for Outstanding Graduate Research.

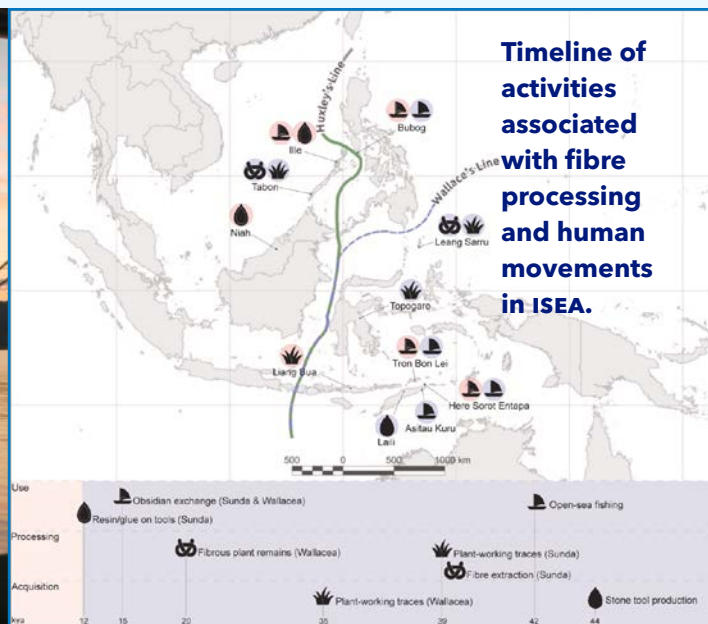
RESEARCH, CREATIVE WORK, AND INNOVATION

Clues of advanced ancient technology found in the Philippines and Island Southeast Asia

TIMOTHY JAMES DIMACALI



READ THE PAPER
ON ARCHIUM



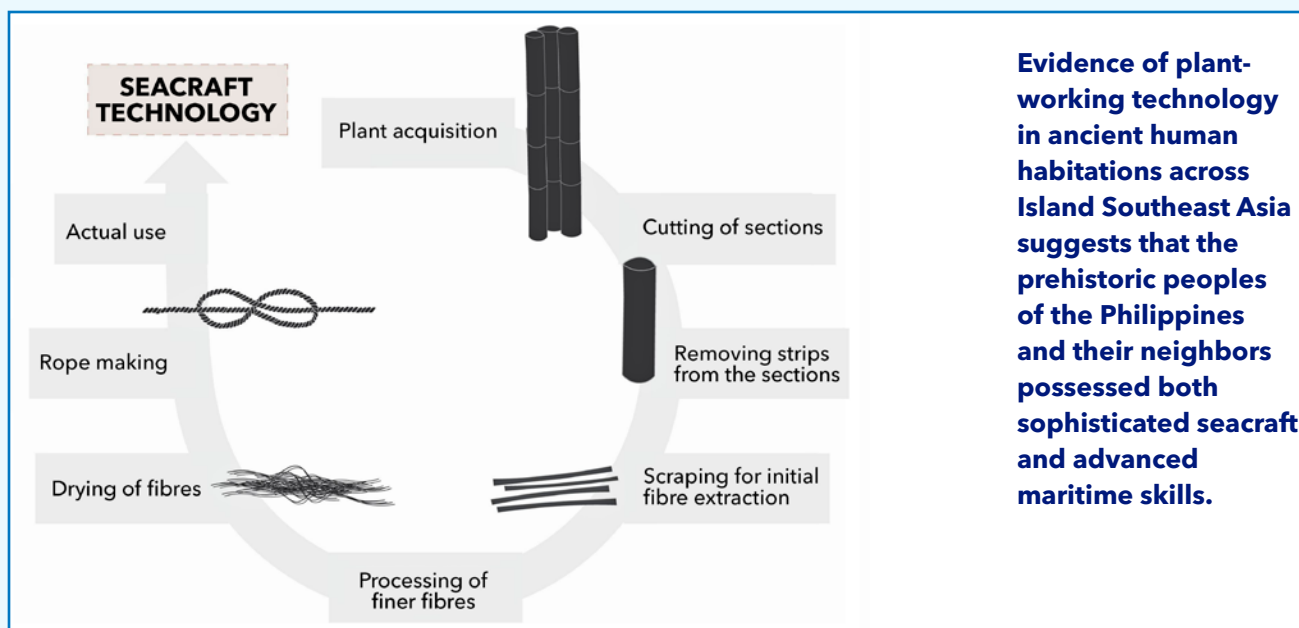
THE ANCIENT PEOPLES OF THE PHILIPPINES AND OF Island Southeast Asia (ISEA) may have built sophisticated boats and mastered seafaring tens of thousands of years ago—millennia before Magellan, Zheng He, and even the Polynesians.

In a new paper coming out in the April 2025 issue of the *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports*, researchers Dr Riczar Fuentes and Dr Alfred Pawlik from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology (DSA) of Ateneo de Manila University's Dr Rosita G Leong School of Social Sciences (RGL-SSS) challenge the widely-held contention that technological progress during the Paleolithic only emerged in Europe and Africa.

They point out that much of ISEA was never connected to mainland Asia, neither by land bridges nor by ice sheets, yet it has yielded

evidence of early human habitation. Exactly how these peoples achieved such daring ocean crossings is an enduring mystery, as organic materials like wood and fiber used for boats rarely survive in the archaeological record. But archaeological sites in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste are now providing strong evidence that ancient seafarers had a technological sophistication comparable to much later civilizations.

Microscopic analysis of stone tools excavated at these sites, dating as far back as some 40,000 years ago, showed clear traces of plant processing—particularly the extraction of fibers necessary for making ropes, nets, and bindings essential for boatbuilding and open-sea fishing. Archaeological sites in Mindoro and Timor-Leste



also yielded the remains of deep ocean fish such as tuna and sharks as well as fishing implements such as fishing hooks, gorges, and net weights.

"The remains of large predatory pelagic fish in these sites indicate the capacity for advanced seafaring and knowledge of the seasonality and migration routes of those fish species," the researchers said in their paper. Meanwhile, the discovery of fishing implements "indicates the need for strong and well-crafted cordage for ropes and fishing lines to catch the marine fauna."

This body of evidence points to the likelihood that these ancient seafarers built sophisticated boats out of organic composite materials held together with plant-based ropes and also used the same rope technology for open-sea fishing. If so, then prehistoric migrations across ISEA were not undertaken by mere passive sea drifters on flimsy bamboo rafts but by highly skilled navigators equipped with the knowledge and technology to travel vast distances and to remote islands over deep waters.

Several years of fieldwork in Ilin Island, Occidental Mindoro, inspired the researchers to think of this topic and to test this hypothesis. Together with naval architects from the University of Cebu, they recently started the First Long-

The remains of large predatory pelagic fish in these sites indicate the capacity for advanced seafaring and knowledge of the seasonality and migration routes of those fish species.

Distance Open-Sea Watercrafts (FLOW) Project, supported by a research grant from Ateneo de Manila University, with the aim of testing raw materials that were probably used in the past, and to design and test scaled-down seacraft models.

The presence of such advanced maritime technology in prehistoric ISEA highlights the ingenuity of early Philippine peoples and their neighbors, whose boat-building knowledge likely made the region a center for technological innovations tens of thousands of years ago and laid the foundations for the maritime traditions that still thrive in the region today. •

RESEARCH, CREATIVE WORK, AND INNOVATION

Tapuy rice wine fermentation yields possible anti-aging superfood



READ THE PAPER
ON ARCHIUM

A



B



Tapuy rice wine starts out as a mixture of black and white glutinous rice (A), which is fermented using a starter culture or *bubod*. After a month, the solid residues from the fermentation process or “lees” (B) are filtered out and usually discarded.

FILIPINO RESEARCHERS HAVE FOUND A WAY TO

optimize the traditional process of making Philippine rice wine—or *tapuy*—and in doing so, may have unlocked a potential superfood packed with antioxidants and anti-aging compounds.

In a recent study published in *Discover Food* (2025), Edward Kevin B Bragais of Ateneo de Manila University and Paul Mark B Medina of the University of the Philippines explored how an age-old practice might hold modern health benefits. Their focus was not on the wine itself, but on the solid byproduct often discarded during production: the lees. These remnants, largely composed of fermented rice, yeast, and other microbial leftovers, may seem like waste—but as it turns out, they could be teeming with life-extending compounds.



The study found that *tapuy* lees, when made using a carefully optimized starter culture, contain unusually high levels of polyphenols—naturally occurring compounds already known to combat oxidative stress, reduce inflammation, and prevent cell damage. These polyphenols are common in health-promoting foods like berries, dark chocolate, and green tea—but their presence in rice wine waste opens up fascinating new possibilities for food science and nutrition.

To understand the difference that fermentation makes, the researchers studied the effects of various *bubod*—the local term for the mix of microorganisms used to initiate fermentation—on the resulting lees. Traditionally, *bubod* is crafted informally, using whatever microbial communities are available in the environment. But Bragais and Medina introduced a defined mix of beneficial microorganisms, including well-known fermentation agents like *Rhizopus oryzae*, *Mucor indicus*, and *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, to more precisely control the process.

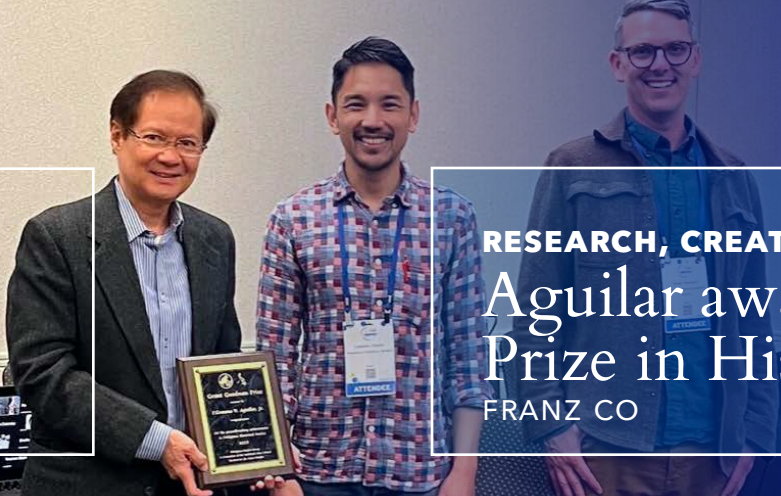
The results were remarkable. In tests using *Caenorhabditis elegans*, a common model organism in aging and biomedical research, the enhanced lees extract did not just perform well—it

dramatically improved lifespan, physical activity, and reproductive capacity. It also triggered a measurable increase in superoxide dismutase (SOD), an enzyme critical for shielding cells from age-related deterioration.

These findings suggest that the humble byproduct of a beloved Filipino drink could be reimagined as a future health food or supplement. Repurposing *tapuy* lees might offer a sustainable and locally rooted approach to mitigating age-related decline and chronic diseases associated with oxidative stress.

The researchers are careful to note that these results are preliminary and based on animal models. Clinical trials in humans would be needed to validate any functional food applications. Still, the implications are promising—and underscore how traditional practices, when examined through the lens of science, can offer new insights into longevity, nutrition, and public health.

What was once thrown away might soon play a role in enhancing and extending human vitality. If further studies confirm the findings, *tapuy* lees could evolve from winemaking residue into a new kind of Filipino superfood—rooted in heritage, backed by science. •



RESEARCH, CREATIVE WORK, AND INNOVATION

Aguilar awarded Grant Goodman Prize in Historical Studies

FRANZ CO

THE PHILIPPINE STUDIES GROUP (PSG), A COMMITTEE OF the Association for Asian Studies' Southeast Asia Council, awarded Dr Filomeno V "Jun" Aguilar Jr the Grant Goodman Prize in Philippine Historical Studies. Dr Aguilar received his award on 14 March 2025 in Columbus, Ohio.

Aguilar obtained his BS Management Engineering degree from Ateneo de Manila and his PhD in Sociology in Cornell University. He is the former Dean of the Rosita G Leong School of Social Sciences, where he is still a Professor of History, and the current Assistant Vice President for Research, Creative Work, and Innovation at Ateneo.

The PSG cited Aguilar for "wide-ranging, rigorously researched, and cross disciplinary" scholarly work, as well as his books and articles. These cover topics ranging from farmers to voters, from rice to sugar, from migration to ethnicity, from natural disasters to the COVID-19 pandemic, from art and education to social forestry, from ilustrado nationalist thought to the teaching of Rizal in high school, from economic history to church history.

The PSG also cited Aguilar's "transformative" stewardship of *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints*—now widely considered field's top academic journal, having rooted global Philippine Studies in the country itself.

Aguilar was also cited for the work he has done in the various offices and positions he has held, including President of the International Association of Historians of Asia (IAHA) and chair of the Philippine Social Science Council (PSSC). The PSG called him an "institution-builder and ambassador for historical scholarship on the Philippines."

He was also chair of the Technical Panel on General Education of the Philippine Commission

on Higher Education (CHED), where he led the most sweeping change in the Philippine tertiary curriculum in decades. He facilitated the design of new interdisciplinary courses like "Understanding the Self," "Readings in Philippine History," and "The Contemporary World," while organizing nationwide training programs for instructors hoping to teach these courses.

Finally, Aguilar was also cited for nurturing and promoting the work of younger generations of Filipino students and scholars as well as that of Philipinists in the country and around the world.

Dr Aguilar is the thirteenth recipient of the Grant Goodman Prize in Philippine Historical Studies and only the fourth person based in the Philippines to receive the recognition. The three others are Resil Mojares (1996), Nicanor G Tiongson (2015), and Fr John Schumacher SJ (1994), the first ever recipient.

"With this prize, I join an illustrious list of past recipients, but compared to them whatever contributions I have made to Philippine historical studies do not measure up," Dr Aguilar stated in his acceptance speech.

He ended his speech with a challenge: there is still much to be done in Philippine historical studies—but more than that, there is an urgent need for this scholarship to shape and transform Philippine society, especially in basic education.

"Our scholarship must alter the wider societal discourse amid deep societal and cultural divides," he said. "It isn't easy. None of us write for school-aged children. Not many of us want to fashion ourselves into social media influencers, although a few have such engagements. It is worth thinking about this task because solid scholarship needs to percolate." •

TANGHALANG ATENEO

Sintang Dalisay

Hyundai Hall
February 2025

PHOTO Camille King



Ateneo theater surged with over 20 productions in the first months of 2025, starting with Areté and Tanghalang Ateneo's *Sintang Dalisay*, honoring the legacies of Ricardo Abad and National Artist Salvador Bernal. Every stage was in motion in college, from Ateneo Fine Arts thesis productions, *Ningning sa Silangan* (TA), *Legally Blonde* (Ateneo Blue Repertory), to *Personalitika* (ENTABLADO). Areté also hosted Tanghalang Pilipino and other drama companies.

A Sem Onstage

2025 OPENS WITH A LANDMARK SURGE OF THEATER ACROSS ATENEO'S STAGES • **ALI FIGUEROA & AUSTIN GONZALES**

DULAANG SIBOL

Sinta!

Tanghalang Pagsanghan
(Dulaang Sibol)
February 2025

PHOTO
Mikli Feria Jorge-San Sebastian



In Basic Ed, AJHS and ASHS Teatro Baguntao explored absurdity and hope, while SHS Broadway Theatre Troupe of Ateneo celebrated musicals. For its 91st season, Ateneo Children's Theater returned to Irwin Theater. And Dulaang Sibol launched its 70th year with four productions—opening on February 7, 2025, when *Sinta!*, the country's longest running musical, celebrated its golden anniversary.

TANGHALANG ATENEO

Ningning sa Silangan

Rizal Mini Theater, March 2025

PHOTO Miguel Abad



ATENEO FINE ARTS

The Revolutionists

Gonzaga Fine Arts Theater
March 2025

PHOTO COURTESY Beatriz Jose



ATENEO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEATRO BAGUNTAO

Ang Sistema ni Propesor Tuko

Hayes Hall, March 2025

PHOTOS Jerome Ignacio



DULAANG SIBOL

Pangarap sa Isang Gabi ng Gitnang Tag-araw

Tanghalang Pagsanghan (Dulaang Sibol), March-April 2025

PHOTOS Rapha Cruz



ATENEO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

TEATRO BAGUNTAO

Paghihintay kay Godo

ASHS Black Box

April 2025

PHOTO Diandra Lee



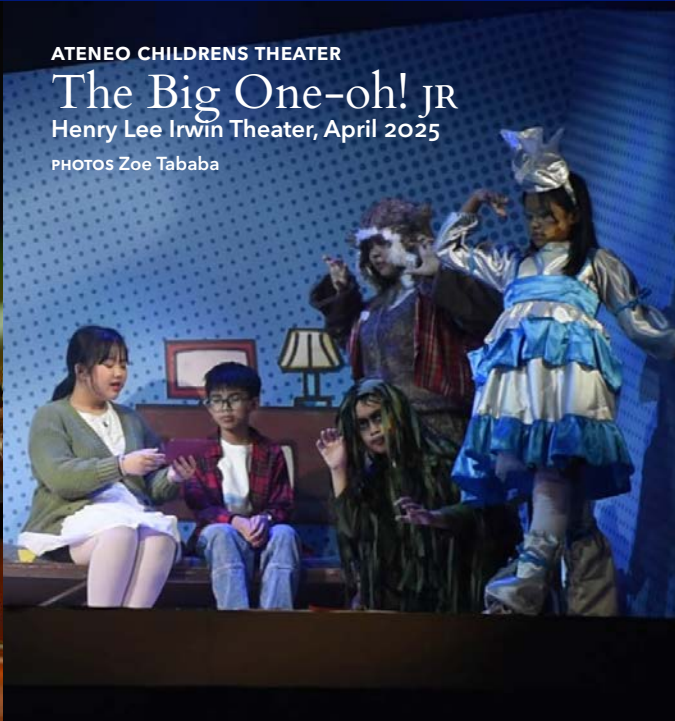


ATENEO FINE ARTS
An Evening at the Opera
Gonzaga Fine Arts Theater, April 2025
PHOTO Zoe Tababa

Evening at the Opera
ZOE TABABA



ATENEO CHILDRENS THEATER
The Big One-oh! JR
Henry Lee Irwin Theater, April 2025
PHOTOS Zoe Tababa



ATENEO ENTABLADO

Personalitika

Fine Arts Black Box Theater

May 2025

PHOTO John Wayne Lee



JOHN WAYNE LEE
Official Photographer

DULAANG SIBOL

Ang Paglilitis ni Mang Serapio

Tanghalang Pagsanghan

(Dulaang Sibol)

April 2025

PHOTO Raph Cruz



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ATENEO BLUE REPERTORY

Legally Blonde

Doreen Black Box Theater, Areté, May 2025

PHOTO Bianx Del Rosario



DULAANG SIBOL

UNANG LIPAD 2025:

Langit Lupa

Tanghalang Pagsanghan
(Dulaang Sibol), May 2025

PHOTOS Austin Gonzales



HULING LIPAD 2025:

Eden

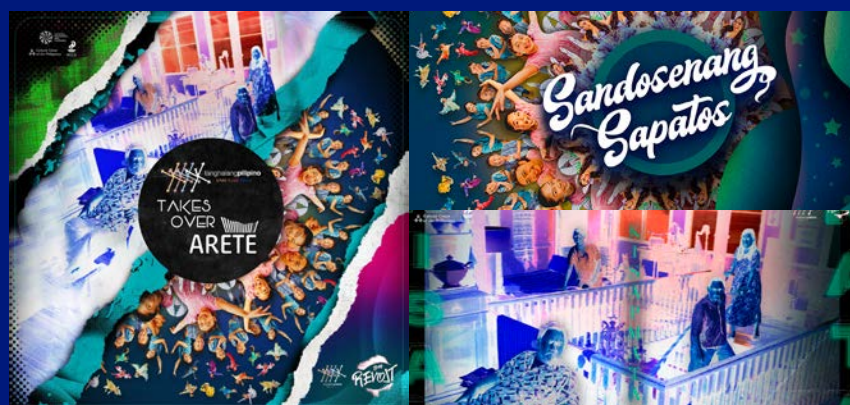
Tanghalang Pagsanghan
(Dulaang Sibol), May 2025

REHEARSAL PHOTOS Missy Bacayo



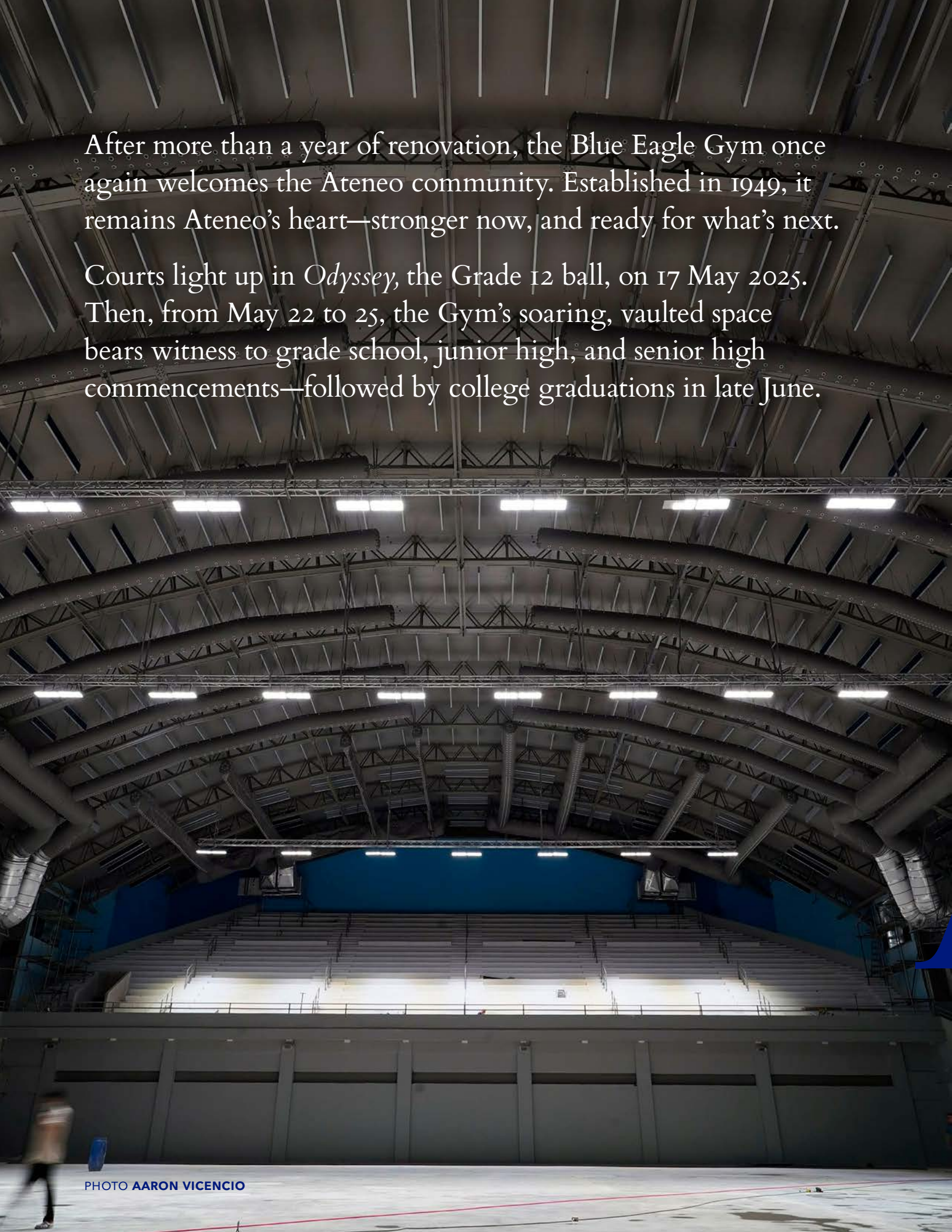


BROADWAY THEATRE TROUPE OF ATENEO
Broadway on Shuffle
 ASHS Black Box Theater, May 2025
 REHEARSAL PHOTO Raph Cruz



This sem also saw collaborations with outside companies that brought new energy to Ateneo's stages and communities. The Philippine national theater company, Tanghalang Pilipino took over Areté with *Kisapmata* and *Sandosenang Sapatos*. A new Atenean-led theater company, Scene Change, debuted with Guelan Varela Luarca's *3 Upuan*. Along with MadChild Productions, they also mounted a staged reading of Luarca's drug war phantasmagoria, *Dogsblood*, in response to the ICC arrest of former President Rodrigo Duterte—supported by Areté and hosted by Dulaang Sibol. Other productions like *Shades of Floy* and *Para Kay B* continued this theatrical cross-pollination, enriching Ateneo's stages as spaces of dialogue, defiance, memory, and experimentation.



A wide-angle, low-perspective shot of the interior of a large, modern gymnasium. The image captures the vast, vaulted ceiling with its complex network of steel trusses and beams. Several long, rectangular light fixtures are suspended from the ceiling, casting a bright, even light across the space. Below the ceiling, the tiered seating area is visible, with rows of light-colored seats. The floor is a polished, light-colored surface, possibly wood or a high-quality synthetic material. In the lower-left corner, a person is walking, their figure slightly blurred, adding a sense of scale and movement to the scene. The overall atmosphere is one of grandeur and modern architectural design.

After more than a year of renovation, the Blue Eagle Gym once again welcomes the Ateneo community. Established in 1949, it remains Ateneo's heart—stronger now, and ready for what's next.

Courts light up in *Odyssey*, the Grade 12 ball, on 17 May 2025. Then, from May 22 to 25, the Gym's soaring, vaulted space bears witness to grade school, junior high, and senior high commencements—followed by college graduations in late June.