

Curator's Report  
Second Annual Indigenous Peoples' Visual Art Show and Competition  
Dipolog City, 1-8 October 2007

OUTLINE OF EVENTS

In celebration of the National Indigenous Peoples' Month in October, the *Kalinawa Art Foundation* ( [www.kalinawa.com](http://www.kalinawa.com) ) in partnership with the Zamboanga del Norte Federation of Visual Artists, Inc. (ZANFEVA), hosted the "2nd Annual Indigenous Peoples' Visual Art Show and Competition" on October 1 to 8, 2007 at the Goodtimes Cafe, Biasong, Dipolog City. The opening of the said art event was graced by Dipolog City Mayor EVELYN T. UY, Provincial Tourism Officer Atty. IVAN PATRICK A. ANG representing Governor ROLANDO E. YEBES, Zamboanga del Sur Vice-Governor ROSELLER L. ARIOSAS, and ZANFEVA Vice-President VICENTE C. LAPUT, JR.

Messages of appreciation and commendation were delivered by Mayor EVELYN UY, Vice-Governor ROSELLER ARIOSAS, and Atty. IVAN PATRICK ANG during the opening program. Cultural and traditional performances were also presented by the DUMENDENGAN ARTISTS GUILD from Pagadian, Zamboanga del Sur, TRIBU DIPAG of Dipolog City, and the "Barangay Cogon Subanen Performers". In particular, Atty. Ivan Patrick A. Ang was elated by the fact the *Kalinawa Art Foundation* is initiating art activities that give due recognition to the Indigenous Artists, almost neglected by other sectors. Atty. Ang also confirmed that the Visual Arts is an effective vehicle to convey the survival of Indigenous Peoples.

Thirty-six Indigenous Artists coming from different areas in Zamboanga del Norte, and guest artists from Zamboanga del Sur enlisted for the exhibit. 115 visual artworks comprised the entire showcase which was categorized into Traditional, Youth, 3-Dimensional Open, and 2-Dimensional Open. Cash prizes were likewise awarded to deserving winning entries. Judging the Art Competitions are VICENTE C. LAPUT, JR., EMMA B. PRIMA, J. KIM O. BATULA, CHOI T. WILLKOM and KU T. GAMALINDA.

Aside from community sale and public viewing of artworks, there was also the uploading of artists' biographical and art pieces' data for the *Kalinawa Art Foundation's* website ( [www.kalinawa.com](http://www.kalinawa.com) ). an on-line auction of artworks was also undergone through eBay.com. Corollary to the entire project, offside events were also presented by renowned personalities. MR. NESTOR HORFILLA, a Davao-based artist, researcher, theater director, scriptwriter, teacher and administrator, presented "Organizing and Curating Indigenous Peoples' Focused Events and Exhibition, Insights on Process and

Outputs". On the other offside event, MR. WILFRIDO ARSENA, visual artist and researcher/writer based in Zamboanga City, lectured on the "Intangibility of Art and the Tangible Need of the Artist".

A Press Conference was also held after the Opening Ceremonies participated in by *Kalinawa Art Foundation* Senior Advisor CARLTON B. HUGHES and ZANFEVA Vice-President VICENTE C. LAPUT, JR. among others. The question and answer event was facilitated by Mr. FRANK GUMAPON, head of the Philippine Information Agency in Dipolog City.

The Closing and Awarding Ceremonies were as colorful as the Opening Ceremony. City Information Officer ATTY. ALANIXON A. SELDA, as speaker for the occasion, delivered among other concerns, a substantial account on the typical life of an artist outlined in socio-cultural history. The ceremony was also high lightened by the performance of ORCHID STRINGS - Zamboanga del Norte National High School Rondalla conducted by MR. JAY SARITA and trained by MRS. MARINA OMISOL. Tribu Dipag contributed some musical and performance pieces complimenting the traditional dance and music by the Barangay Cogon Subanen Group.

#### CURATOR'S NOTE

The "*2nd Indigenous Peoples' Visual Art Show and Competition*" in Dipolog City aims to achieve a more comprehensive collection of traditional and contemporary visual art works by the Subanens, Kalibugans and Muslim groups residing within the Zamboanga del Norte province.

As the art event focuses on the indigenous person as artist and creator, the choice of a subject matter or theme and preference to material or medium used are for each individual participant to decide.

Several indigenous artists from all over the province were previously informed and consulted, and invited and encouraged to participate in the event. The exhibition becomes a showcase of various expressions and manifestations by both seasoned and upcoming artists.

Consequently, the curatorial format flows spontaneously, yet, with focus on the total visual impact rather than categorizing the items on the basis of theme, medium, and other classifications.

From the simple square-sized "Nigo" from Paranglumba, Siayan and wood carvings from Marupay, Jose Dalman, to the more intricate bamboo *totem poles* from Dipolog City, creativity and imagination are artistically expressed.

The paintings rendered in various modes and presentations, also compliment the art pieces done in the traditional manner.

This Indigenous Peoples' Visual Art Show is not only a presentation of tangible and concrete cultural implements and ornamentations, it also creates the possibility of a venue for the expression and communication of unique and enduring traditions. As such, the "2nd Indigenous Peoples' Visual Art Show and Competition" is only one possible step to addressing the issue of a lack of support and understanding for the diverse cultural traditions of Indigenous Peoples.

Don Gurrea  
20 November 2007

**NOTE:** This text (with minor modifications) was submitted for publication as a media article under the title "INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' VISUAL ART SHOW AND COMPETITION" for Press Freedom 11 October, 2007)

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**COMMENT:** While providing an adequate description of the event, this report overlooks several important aspects. First, the *Kalinawa Art Foundation* made three important investments in this event to ensure its sustainable development:



- Provision of funds for the curator to travel in order to identify other Indigenous Peoples artists
- Provision of funds for panels and lighting, not only to improve the quality of the display of art for *Kalinawa* events, but also for the community to use for other activities. These facilities were left in the care of ZANFEVA, and it is understood that they will be maintained for future use by the *Kalinawa Art Foundation*, as well as for other community use. For

example, these facilities will be used for a group art exhibition in Sindangan for three weeks (starting 17 December 2007) in time for the Sindangan Week Celebration held by MUGNA (Sindangan Visual Artists).

- Provision of funds to ensure the participation of artists, performers and speakers for off-side events. Note should be made that Mr. Arseña also gave several presentations to local artists on different materials to be used for wood carving.

Second, as a possible consequence of being engaged with other activities elsewhere, the report overlooks the importance of evolving relationships. In particular, while noting the participation of cultural and traditional performances by the DUMENDENGAN ARTISTS GUILD from Pagadian, Zamboanga del Sur, it overlooks the facts that:

- This was the first occasion for artists from the area to participate in such an event, and will be followed up by the *Kalinawa Art Foundation* with an event in Pagadian, Zamboanga del Sur with partners there in May 2008.
- The performance mentioned in the report actually provoked some controversy, as Subanens from Zamboanga del Norte felt that it should not have been performed in public. But, this goes to the value of having such events so that exchanges such as these can and will occur.

Third, the report does not mention that the press conference was well attended (see: <http://www.kalinawa.com/UserFiles/File/Dipolog2%20press%20release-afterevent%20for%20web.pdf>) nor the fact that despite this, rumours still swirl around Dipolog about the *Foundation*. An article, "Diocese reaffirms stand against TVI" published on page 1 and 6, Press Freedom, 6 October 2007 edition, Vol.XIX, no. 52" (and subsequently online at: <http://dipolognews.prepys.com/2007/10/22/diocese-reaffirms-stand-against-tvi/>), contained several errors. In reply to this the *Kalinawa Art Foundation* submitted a letter to the editor, which remains unpublished, the reasons for which also remain unknown, but the point is that this report does not mention this or any of the issues raised in the letter, despite the fact that the report was a subsequent publication in the same newspaper. Thus, the text of the letter is attached as an Appendix below.

Finally, as has been mentioned on other occasions the *Kalinawa Art Foundation* strives to be a learning organization, not only in relation to its own practices, but also in relation to the things that can be shared with others. There are two issues related to this. First, while discussions about the *Foundation's* approach to include an art competition has been raised elsewhere in relation to this year's event in Dipolog, it is absent in this report. Related to this is the fact that despite discussion and some controversy at this year's event in Dipolog related to the process of judging the art, there is no mention of this in the report. And this is the second issue. As this is the second year for the event in Dipolog, some comparison with the previous year's event would have been useful.

Carlton B. Hughes  
*Kalinawa Art Foundation*  
16 December 2007

**APPENDIX:**

Text of the letter submitted by hand to  
Mrs. Maria Victoria Lood-Young  
Publisher/Editor, Press Freedom  
076 Quezon Avenue  
Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte  
8 October 2007

Re: "Diocese reaffirms stand against TVI" published on page 1 and 6, Press Freedom, 6 October 2007 edition, Vol.XIX, no. 52

Dear Mrs. Lood-Young;

In the above referenced article, I must take exception to some of the erroneous statements attributed to Bishop Manguiran, if the unmentioned "art contest among the natives" that he is criticizing "the Canadians for sponsoring" is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Indigenous Peoples' visual art exhibition held at the Goodtimes Café. Here are some facts about this event:

- This event was the work of two partners as an activity during national Indigenous Peoples' month. The first partner, the Zamboanga del Norte Federation of Visual Artists (ZANFEVA), has no Canadian members (confirmed by Mr. Don Gurrea, President, ZANFEVA). The visual artists participating in this event ("the natives") are Indigenous People from the Dipolog area. Thus, the unnamed Canadians must be associated with the other partner, *Kalinawa Art Foundation*. The *Foundation* is a Philippine based entity, duly registered with the SEC. The founder is a Canadian, as am I. The rest of the staff from the *Kalinawa Art Foundation* are Filipino as are all the volunteers who assisted in the event. I have not confirmed the nationalities of the various guest speakers and Indigenous peoples' performance artists who participated in the opening ceremony on October 4<sup>th</sup> and the award ceremony on October 6th, nor the of the five judges, selected from the local community for the competition aspect of this event, but suspect that all are Filipino. However, I will willingly undertake this survey to confirm these as facts.
- This year and last, Bishop Manguiran was invited to attend, formally and informally by the *Kalinawa Art Foundation* and by me personally. On neither occasion was a reply received from him, so it is not known if he attended either event. It is possible that he may have viewed information on the activities of the *Foundation's* website at: [www.kalinawa.com](http://www.kalinawa.com) .

The point is that in attending the event, one does have the opportunity to see the pride and satisfaction that the participants express in seeing Indigenous Peoples' visual arts displayed and treated with respect and dignity. As to the matter that "the art or drawing did not actually depict the real scenario, especially at Canatuan", the point must be made that neither of

- the organizers of this Indigenous Peoples' visual art event demand that submissions conform to a preconceived view or theme. Further, it is my opinion, one which I would gladly discuss further with Bishop Manguiran if this is his point and/or your paper if it is yours, that the lived experience of Indigenous Peoples, upon which much of their visual art is based, should not be based on a single issue (Canatuan) or a set of preconceived notions (the unspecified "real scenario")
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Indigenous Peoples' visual art exhibition is more than a competition. Participating Indigenous peoples' visual artists are not compelled to have their pieces as part of the competition: it is their choice to make. Let me enumerate three of the other activities during this event, beyond the competition and the guest speakers and Indigenous peoples' performance artists mentioned above:
  - Presentation by Mr. Nestor Horfilla (Filipino) titled "Organizing and Curating Indigenous Peoples' Focused Events and Exhibition, Insights on Process and Outputs". Mr. Horfilla is an artist, researcher, theatre, director, scriptwriter, teacher and administrator, and a major force in the propagation of cultural work as part of development in the regions.
  - Presentation by Mr. Willy Arseña (Filipino) titled Intangibility of Art and The Tangible Need of the Artist". Mr. Arseña is a respected artist in Zamboanga and former owner of Recuerdos Art Gallery who also provided two workshops on different sculpting methods and tools.

It is possible that Canadians may have attended these events, but they would have to be more than adequately proficient in Tagalog and Visayan, the languages used at both.

- The third event was the open press conference following the opening ceremony at the venue at which the media (and others) asked me (representing the *Kalinawa Art Foundation*) and Mr. Vincente Laput (representing ZANFEVA) several different questions. Worth noting is that these questions continued throughout the week, ending at the award ceremony with an interview of me by a representative from the student newspaper

at Zamboanga del Norte National High School.  
In these media related activities, my suspicion is that all the participants Filipino.  
However, I will willingly undertake this survey as well to confirm this fact.

In closing, it should be noted in fairness to Bishop Manguiran and/or your paper, that there may be some other Canadian sponsored art contest among the natives. If so, the *Kalinawa Art Foundation* would be most interested in learning more about it, as it is the intent of the *Foundation* to contribute to, and participate in, the sustainable development of the Indigenous Peoples' visual art sector, an activity acknowledged widely as not being undertaken by any other agency in the Philippines. If this is not the case, and the Bishop and/or your paper is indeed referring to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Indigenous Peoples' visual art exhibition held at the Goodtimes Café in Dipolog last week, then it is incumbent upon the Bishop and/or your paper to make some form of public retraction and/or disavowal of the statements attributed to him in the article, "Diocese reaffirms stand against TVI" published on page 1 and 6, Press Freedom, 6 October 2007 edition, Vol.XIX, no. 52.

Sincerely yours;

(signed)

Carlton B. Hughes  
*Kalinawa Art Foundation*

cc: Bishop Jose Manguiran, Diocese of Dipolog  
Mr. Cicerio "Don" Gurrea, President, ZANFEVA