

SINDANGAN ARTISTS EXHIBIT ARTWORKS IN DIPOLOG
by Don Gurrea
(December 14, 2006)

An art exhibition by MUGNA was held between November 15 until December 12, 2006 at the Provincial Art Gallery, ZN Convention and Exhibition Center, Dipolog City. Member artists from MUNGA who participated were:

- RENANTE ANINON,
- KIM BATULA,
- EDWIN DAGONDONG,
- BETH BORDADO-GURREA,
- DON GURREA,
- ARIS REBOLLIDO,
- RUBY SABANAL and
- SAMSON SAILE

Presented by the Zamboanga del Norte Federation of Visual Artists (ZANFEVA), "Pagpadayag" is the third group art exhibition by MUGNA, a visual arts organization based in Sindangan, Zamboanga del Norte. MUGNA was organized two years ago as a result of the growing number of practicing artists based in Sindangan. MUGNA aims at recognizing, supporting and developing individual artistic and creative talents among the residents of Sindangan.

More than thirty art pieces in various media and in different dimensions were on display. The artworks were not limited to a single theme, so that each participating artist would have the creative freedom to explore extensively various concerns. Among the concerns being expressed by the artists were family relationships, the plight of the common worker, women's issues and rural scenes among others.

KIM BATULA is the concurrent president of MUNGA. A businessman by profession, he started his artistic activities hanging out with other artists while taking up his agriculture studies at Silliman University in Dumaguete City. He is known for his colourful, decorative and intricately woven designs out of both representational and non-representational forms. He has a penchant in portraying albeit suggestively, everyday observations having dealt closely with workers at their family-owned rice mill, aside from being a church leader in Barangay Goleo, Sindangan. This affinity to human relationships is evident in his "Irony of the Living" and "Worker's Haven" among his other socio-cultural related compositions.

SAMSON SAILE is the group's vice-president and with the degree of AB History from Saint Vincent's College in Dipolog City, he is now teaching full-time at Saint Joseph College in Sindangan. SAMSON traces his roots to the Subanen tribe thru his paternal grandmother, with the result that he was able to participate in the Indigenous Peoples' Art Show and Competition held at Goodtimes Cafe in Dipolog City last October, 2006 hosted by the *Kalinawa Art Foundation*. His innate ability to collect novelty items and reconstruct them for artistic purposes can be traced back to his younger days when he would just love to gather things, big or small, anything that would attract his creative eyes. SAMSON's "42nd Street", a mixed media composition, is a romantic reminiscence of his life in New York as a migrant worker in the early eighties. Another mixed media piece, "Kenosis", evokes a sense of connectivity between human and divine consciousness, sexuality being the conduit issue. An ex-seminarian and a former social worker, SAMSON's first-hand experiences with people from different walks of life become rich sources for his artistic creativity.

RUBY SABANAL acts as the secretary. With a Fine Arts degree from San Carlos University in Cebu City, she is fully equipped with the classical fundamentals for making art. Her rudiments from the academe serve as a springboard for visually expressing herself. A UCCP leader for the youth, RUBY finds optimism in human relationships through proper moral and religious upbringing. Her artistic concerns involve primarily on family relationships, cognizant of the fact that the family is the basic unit of society where all other relationships emanate from. Presented in a relatively bigger scale, "Mothers", "Among Inahan", and "Trabahante", all done in oil on canvas, are among Ruby's visual commentaries on human relationships.

BETH BORDADO-GURREA serves as the group's acting treasurer. A dedicated housewife and mother, she concerns herself with the simplicity of nature in floral compositions and genre. She finds color and suggestive lines to be the determining factors in her varied compositions. In her "Boy with Spider", she tries to capture life in the countryside through the image of a small boy with a farmer on a carabao as backdrop.

ARIS REBOLLIDO teaches business subjects at the Saint Joseph College in Sindangan. He is known for utilizing non-conventional indigenous materials in art making such as in his recent gigantic art piece "Victory in the Seed" which is a huge 48 x 96 inches in size. ARIS is an Indigenous Person by virtue of his mother's lineage who came from one of the most prominent Subanen clans (Datu Tangkilan) based in Sindangan since the Pre-Spanish period. Instead of applying paints on canvas, he took advantage in using various seeds that come in different natural hues. ARIS identifies as art materials, at least eighteen different varieties of indigenous seeds such as mongo, rice, yellow and white

corn, green pea, sunflower, dawa, and sorgum among many other locally produced commercial seeds.

EDWIN DAGONDONG is a free-lance electrician and mechanic by profession. He is the Amorsolo of the group. His romantic compositions remind us of the beauty and artistic discipline of the Amorsolo school. Whether it is human figures in his "Pangilin" or a botanical composition in "Still Life in the Garden", his respect for Naturalism is quite evident. EDWIN is seventy-five percent Subanen whose parents are both belonging to the Subanen tribe based in Sindangan.

RENANTE ANINON studied drafting and arts in Dapitan City. At present he works as a billboard and sign artists. He did the banners used for the *Kalinawa Art Foundation* at the Dipolog Indigenous Peoples' Art Show and Competition using ethnic designs and art forms.

Leading the opening ceremony last November 15 were Mr. ROSENDO LABADLABAD, former Jose Dalman Mayor LUDWIG ADAZA and Dr. VICENTE DALMAN, among other special guests. Mr. LABADLABAD gave an inspiring impromptu speech to the crowd of artists and art enthusiasts. As an art subscriber, he looks forward to helping to promote the local artists and their artworks thru extensive global marketing. KIM BATULA, concurrent president of MUNGA, was more than pleased by the success of "Pagpadayag". On behalf of the group he expressed the wish to extend gratitude to the following for their most-needed financial and moral support:

- the *Kalinawa Art Foundation*,
- Rancho San Roque,
- Local Government Unit of Sindangan,
- MR. VICENTE LAPUT, JR for curating the show,
- DR. VICENTE DALMAN for directing the opening program, and Councillor BOY SY for the transportation.

Note:

As part of the agreement with the *Kalinawa Art Foundation* to provide support to MUNGA for Indigenous Peoples' artists to participate in "Pagpadayag", Mr. Gurrea undertook to provide this written report on the event. Some of the information provided in this report has been published previously in the November 18, 2006 issue of Press Freedom, which was also written by Mr. Gurrea.

