



KALINAWA ART FOUNDATION

**Notes for Remarks by Carlton B. Hughes
Former Senior Policy Advisor, *Kalinawa Art Foundation*
at the formal unveiling of “Spirit of the Shaman Transformed into a Rock”
Magsasay Park, Davao City, Mindanao, 27 August 2008**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Distinguished guests, friends and colleagues, good afternoon. My name is Carlton Hughes and I am the former Senior Policy Advisor for the *Kalinawa Art Foundation*. It is a great honor for me to have been invited by the *Foundation* back to Davao to participate in the 3rd Annual Indigenous Peoples’ Visual Art Exhibition and to provide some remarks on this part of that activity – the formal unveiling of “Spirit of the Shaman Transformed into a Rock”. It is one of three major activities to occur, the others being the open art exhibition and competition at the Institute for Indigenous Peoples’ Education on Mabini Street which will open immediately following this event and Convergence: Under One Sky – Nurturing the Earth to open at the Museo Dabawenyo on Pichon Street from 30 August – 30 September. This exhibition features Mindanao artists from previous *Kalinawa Art Foundation* open exhibitions

Please indulge me for a moment while I provide some background, first on the *Kalinawa Art Foundation*, second on Lantaw-Ani, for which this project was but one component and finally about the “Spirit of the Shaman Transformed into a Rock” – the collaborative installation artwork created by Mindanao based Lumad artists and a Quebec based Inuit artist for which we are gathered today to formally unveil.

The *Kalinawa Art Foundation* is the direct result of the vision and commitment of Mr. and Mrs. David Gilinsky, who wanted to make a distinct contribution to the Philippines reflecting their respective different backgrounds – from Canada and from the Philippines. With their decision to form a foundation to support and participate in the development of the Indigenous Peoples’ visual art sector in the Philippines, four concepts were clearly laid down:

- First, the foundation would be more of a social enterprise than a traditional philanthropy, the key difference being that the Foundation would be guided by making investments in activities rather than donations and that the returns on the investments for the Foundation would be used to further the development of the sector
- Second, the foundation was to be a sustainable activity, which meant two things.
 - Once the foundation started with a community, it would be committed to returning to that community for another exhibition; and
 - Expectations were that the impact of the work of the *Kalinawa Art Foundation* would only begin at the five year mark of its activities.

- Third, acknowledgement needed to be given to the artists that they had created their work and maintained their commitment to their art without support. Thus, the role of the *Foundation* was to provide opportunities for their work, and through this, their different cultures to be appreciated and celebrated and their skills enhanced through interaction with other artists as well as training.
- Finally, the *Kalinawa Art Foundation* would be a learning organization, not only in relation to transmitting information to others, but also learning from others. This was considered absolutely essential, as it may surprise you to know that there is not one artist among the staff of the *Foundation*.

I could continue with this, but more information on the *Kalinawa Art Foundation* and its activities can be on its website at www.kalinawa.com.

Now, some background on *Lantaw-Ani*. This was the first major project undertaken by the *Foundation* in Manila. In cooperation with the *Foundation*, and the support and input of many others, Mr. Nestor Horfilla, creative consultant and project designer built *Lantaw-Ani* around two separate, but inter-related exhibitions of visual arts, *Freedom to Dream* and *Kalilimodan* (gathering). The works of forty-four different artists were on display at these exhibitions.

Kalilimodan (Gathering) opened on 22 November 2007 as part of the AHPADA Expo and was built around selections of visual arts from Indigenous Peoples from Mindanao and Palawan to show the rich diversity of traditions and influences of contemporary and traditional Indigenous Peoples' visual arts, showcasing traditional arts as well as contemporary art pieces. The exhibition had three themes:

- Dream-weavers Tales of Home - Works of indigenous artists are intertwined with the fabric of home and culture. It is a home that persists in traditional practices of daily life, in the rituals of community making, in the sustaining spirit of belief in powers beyond ourselves.
- Threats and Transformation - The Indigenous Peoples artist finds home as a stronghold of identity that gives context and meaning to the encroaching and engulfing hegemony of the global. The artworks in this exhibition illustrate initiatives for cultural re-invigoration and survival, amidst the transformed homes. They also affirm culture as a wellspring of inspiration and springboard for cultural assertion.
- Regenerating Roots – Foremost in the hierarchy of cultural relationships is the bond between the community and Magbabaya. And so at every turn throughout and beyond the village---in the forest, at the riverbank, on a promontory---proudly stand altars. Here the community gathers to give thanks to the Ad'wata (deities) for a good harvest, or to beseech them for the grace of healing, or to ask for blessings during milestones that mark the passage of time and generations: birth, marriage, death.

Mr. David Gilinsky, noted that "I am very pleased and honored that the *Foundation* was able to secure the space for an exhibition of Indigenous Peoples' visual arts from the

Philippines, *as visual arts*, at the AHPADA (Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Handicraft Promotion and Development Association) Expo. It is from this opportunity to present the visual arts of Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines to a region-wide audience that the idea of extending the project to include an exhibition of Inuit art was developed.

Freedom to Dream, was a joint exhibition of the art works of two peoples, the Inuit artists from Canada and Indigenous Peoples from the Philippines. By design, the intent was to show that Indigenous Peoples, in any part of the world, have their unique traditions and life-ways but at the same time possess distinct similarities in both intention and function of the art pieces. There were four themes:

- The Spirit World of the Shaman - Central to the world of the indigenous is the role of the Shaman – the storyteller and the medium who connects the community members to the world of the spirits
- Homage to Ancestors - Ancestors hold a significant place in the Indigenous Peoples worldviews and life-ways as gleaned from the common practice of “ancestors worship” for both the Inuit and Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines.
- Ancestral Homeland - The Ancestral homeland is not mere place of habitation. It defines the indigenous peoples’ view of the world and ways of living in their world. It is the staging ground of the community’s sense of stewardship.
- Seasons and Transformations - Indigenous Peoples live in seasons. The rhythms of the sea, the cycle of night and day, the melting of ice, the sprouts of spring, the time of harvest, the warmth of the sun dictate the flow of life.

Freedom to Dream was made possible through cooperation with Galerie Elca London of Montreal, Canada and the support of the Trade Section at the Canadian Embassy. It opened at the White Cube Gallery of the Metropolitan Museum in Manila on Friday, 23 November 2007, before traveling to Davao and Cebu. The exhibition returned to Manila and closed on 22 December. While ***Freedom to Dream*** was in Davao and Cebu, ***Kalilimodan*** was mounted at the Metropolitan Museum in Manila.

As important as the ***Freedom to Dream*** exhibition was (it is the first of its kind in the Philippines), an equally important part of the exhibition was the visit of Mattuisi Iyatuk, a prominent Inuit artist and President of the Inuit Art Foundation of Canada, who was able to provide the opportunity to explore Inuit art and life from a lived (rather than only material) perspective. What evolved was the opportunity to interact with various Indigenous Peoples visual artist from Mindanao beginning with his visit to Davao for Kalimudan: A gathering of Indigenous Culture Bearers held in November in Magsasay Park, which among other things explored Indigenous Peoples’ architecture.

As a result of their interactions, the artists decided to build an Inuksuk as a symbol of their meeting. An Inuksuk is a traditional way that Inuit marked territory and direction in the Arctic. Made of stones artfully piled together, sometimes in a way to represent the human form, the

Inuksuk has evolved into an important symbol of the Inuit and Canada. Thus, what you see before you today is not only the result of the creative interaction on Mattuisi Iyatuk and the artists from Mindanao: Paul Bendit, Sultan Cruz, Waway Saway and Ronald Tamfalan, but their labor as well, as they are the ones who built it. One important feature I would draw your attention to is the circle of rocks surrounding the Inuksuk. These were provided by each of the Datus attending Kalimudan as a symbol of their welcoming of Mattiusi to the event.

And there it is – part of the story and context within which “Spirit of the Shaman Transformed into a Rock”, came to be and why we are gathered today, not only to acknowledge this work of art, but also the ideas, commitment and labor of those who contributed to its coming to be. Thank you very much for your time and it is my sincerest hope that you will take the opportunity to enjoy this celebration of Indigenous Peoples’ visual arts.

NOTE: Descriptions provided in the above text are directly taken from the exhibition notes created by Nestor Horfilla