

Art in Embassies Exhibition
United States Embassy Manila

jeff huntington | José Rizal, 2014

Collage and acrylic on canvas, 34 x 30 x 2 in. (86,4 x 76,2 x 5,1 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Annapolis, Maryland

art in embassies



Established in 1963, the U.S. Department of State's office of Art in Embassies (AIE) plays a vital role in our nation's public diplomacy through a culturally expansive mission, creating temporary and permanent exhibitions, artist programming, and publications. The Museum of Modern Art first envisioned this global visual arts program a decade earlier. In the early 1960s, President John F. Kennedy formalized it, naming the program's first director. Now with over 200 venues, AIE curates temporary and permanent exhibitions for the representational spaces of all U.S. chanceries, consulates, and embassy residences worldwide, selecting and commissioning contemporary art from the U.S. and the host countries. These exhibitions provide international audiences with a sense of the quality, scope, and diversity of both countries' art and culture, establishing AIE's presence in more countries than any other U.S. foundation or arts organization.

AIE's exhibitions allow foreign citizens, many of whom might never travel to the United States, to personally experience the depth and breadth of our artistic heritage and values, making what has been called a: "footprint that can be left where people have no opportunity to see American art."

"For fifty years, Art in Embassies has played an active diplomatic role by creating meaningful cultural exchange through the visual arts. The exhibitions, permanent collections and artist exchanges connect people from the farthest corners of an international community. Extending our reach, amplifying our voice, and demonstrating our inclusiveness are strategic imperatives for America. Art in Embassies cultivates relationships that transcend boundaries, building trust, mutual respect and understanding among peoples. It is a fulcrum of America's global leadership as we continue to work for freedom, human rights and peace around the world."

— John Forbes Kerry
U.S. Secretary of State

introduction

In a toast to the great Filipino artists Juan Luna and Felix Hidalgo, Dr. Jose Rizal said “Genius has no country. It blossoms everywhere. Genius is like the light, the air. It is the heritage of all.” In that same spirit I’m pleased to be able to share with you an exhibition of paintings that admirably captures the rich cultural heritage and ties of our two countries.

The works in this exhibition are by both Filipino and American artists. Johanna Poehig and Athena Magcase-Lopez draw on the quintessentially American story of the immigrant experience from opposite directions of emigration, while Filipino-American Jeff Huntington uses a famous portrait of Rizal as a means of discovering his own Philippine roots. This same need for historical authenticity permeates the work of Quezon City resident Leo Abaya, who has two works on display.

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It is a pleasure to be able to share these works with you as part of the U.S. Department of State’s Art in Embassies program. I am especially grateful to the artists that made this exhibition possible, and hope you enjoy viewing their works as much as I do.

Ambassador Philip Goldberg

Manila, July 2015

leo abaya 1960

“I subscribe to the notion that the proliferation of images used today for thinking and communication has broadened people’s sense of visuality. It continues to increase porosity to the boundaries that restrict conventional art practices . . . But I also think that the more daily life is inundated by images, the more we aestheticise almost anything today, the more we should be mindful and critical of their use – ethically, socially and politically.”

Leo Abaya holds a Bachelor of Science degree in economics from Holy Name University, Tagbilaran, Bohol, The Philippines; a Bachelor of Arts degree in painting from the College of Fine Arts, University of Fine Arts, Diliman, The Philippines; and a Master of Fine Arts degree in fine art from Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, United Kingdom. He currently lives and works in Quezon City, The Philippines.

Abaya practices in a variety of media, including painting, collage, works on paper, sculpture, and installation. In 2013 Abaya added full-length feature filmmaking to his practice. His debut film, *Instant Mommy*, was screened as one of ten finalists at the 9th Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival, and at the 33rd Hawaii International Film Festival (Spotlight on the Philippines), the 50th Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival (Asian Window), the 11th World Film Festival of Bangkok (Asian Perspective), the 10th Dubai International Film Festival (Cinema of Asia and Africa), and the 9th Osaka Asian Film Festival (Special Screening). In July of 2014, the film made its Canadian premiere at Your Kontinent: 4th Richmond International Film and Media Arts Festival.

<http://cargocollective.com/leoabaya>

leo abaya

negotiating space, 2005

Acrylic and oil on linen, 29 x 39 ½ in. (73,7 x 100,3 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Quezon City, The Philippines





this can happen
elsewhere, 2004

*Oil and acrylic on linen
65 x 31 in. (165,1 x 78,7 cm)*

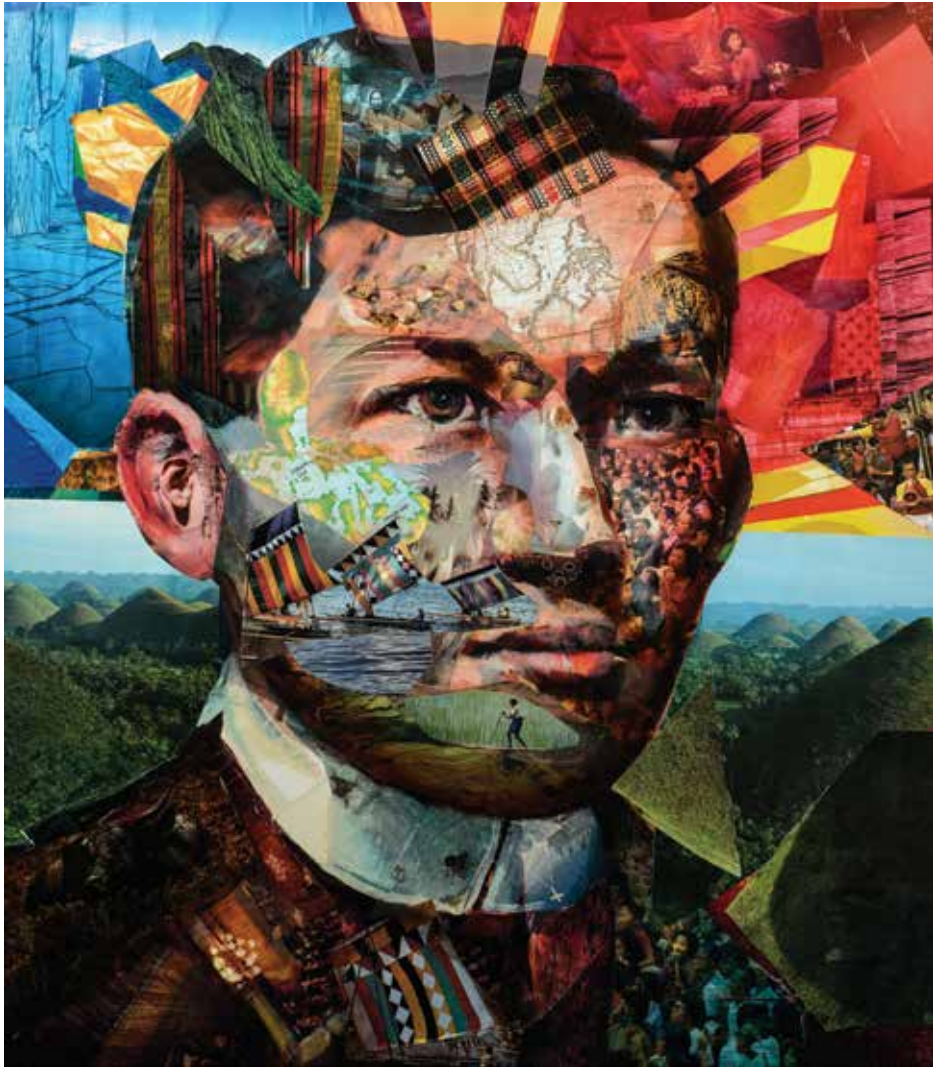
*Courtesy of the artist,
Quezon City, The Philippines*

jeff huntington 1970

Born in San Antonio, Texas, Jeff Huntington holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C., and a Master of Fine Arts degree from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (Illinois). Since his first exhibition in 1992, Huntington has participated in over forty exhibitions and won numerous awards. In 2005 his exhibitions included *December 2005* at the Alpan Gallery in Long Island, New York; Transformer's 2nd Annual Auction at the Fusebox in Washington, D.C.; and *Bill Newman and Friends: Uncommon Vision* at the Arts Club of Washington, D.C. In addition, his recent awards include 2nd Place in *The Exhibition of American Art* at The Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago and The Ethel Lorraine Bernstein Memorial Award for Excellence in Painting.

www.raandeskgallery.com/artistBio.php?artistId=11

Based on Ambassador Philip Goldberg's vision of featuring Filipino and U.S. artists whose work reflects the historic and cultural ties between our two countries, Filipino-American Jeff Huntington chose to create a collage around Filipino nationalist José Rizal (1861-1896). He began researching Rizal online, and also used two books he had gotten from his father as the source for the imagery. The initial composition, a centralized likeness of Rizal with elements of the Filipino flag radiating outward, suggests the figure's broad reach. Some of the later additions include fragments of maps, an allusion to his being well-travelled and educated, and glimpses of terraced rice paddies and *vintas* (or sailing boats), references to The Philippines's landscape, economy, and religion. For Huntington, the collage process is a form of discovery and reflection. Beyond identifying just the right piece of paper for its content, he delights in the interplay between paper, paint, and glazing. In the end, the picture of Rizal had become the "regulating intelligence" for an image that had evolved into a portrait of the country itself.



José Rizal, 2014

Collage and acrylic on canvas, 34 x 30 x 2 in. (86,4 x 76,2 x 5,1 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Annapolis, Maryland

athena magcase lopez 1952

“I create art to convey and inspire change by depicting on canvas, empowered men and women who fight against oppression and discrimination of all kinds, and in the process are leading lives of dignity and meaning.

Like most global immigrants, the Filipinos, because of complex and deeply rooted socio-economic problems, search for a better life in other countries. For decades, they have settled and worked in many places around the world. Though they are able to integrate with ease in communities where they have settled, mainly here in America because of their adaptability to western ways and the English language, living in another country is not without pain and difficulties for Filipinos before they are able to prevail and achieve their purpose.

I'm no different. As I continue to live and work here, with distance, time and new memories pushing against my feeling of being uprooted, I have begun to call two countries home because The Philippines remains precious and new roots are sowed in America. In my work as a visual artist, I continue to paint and depict the Filipino people's struggle for a life of dignity. The parallelism in my two paintings, *Weaver in a Cave* and *A Home Between*, is intentional. It shows the 'then' and 'now' of two Filipino artisans/artists.

In *Weaver in a Cave*, it depicts that the natives had a form of writing, processed herbs and plants for medicine, practiced forms of faith healing, fashioned earthenware pottery and wove bark cloth.

A Home Between is a sequel to *Weaver in a Cave*, the painting within the painting at upper left. It is a situational portrait of the artist in her home in America, where she came to look at this place with hope and comfort.”

athena magcase lopez

Athena Santos Magcase-Lopez earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the College of the Holy Spirit, Manila, The Philippines. In addition to being a visual artist, she is a professional portrait painter, art director, graphic artist, children's book illustrator, art educator, and kindergarten teacher. A member of the Philippine Association of Printmakers, she has shown her work throughout the United States and The Philippines, including a retrospective at the Angel Orensanz Foundation Center for the Arts, New York City, and in the *Triumph of Philippine Art*, presented by The George Segal Gallery at Montclair State University, New Jersey, and the Ayala Museum, Makati City, The Philippines.

www.geocities.com/athenasantosmagcaselopez
and from materials supplied by the artist

athena magcase lopez



weaver in a cave, 2007

Oil on canvas

30 x 40 in. (76,2 x 101,6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Morris Plains, New Jersey

athena magcase lopez



a home between, 2009

Oil on canvas

30 x 40 in. (76,2 x 101,6 cm)

Courtesy of the artist, Morris Plains, New Jersey

Johanna Poethig

“These two works of art are selected from a body of work that I have done as part of the Filipino- American arts movement in the United States. *Lapu Lapu and Manong Benny* is a picture taken of a small section of my 1984, ninety-foot high mural *Ang Lipi ni Lapu Lapu*, which depicts the history of Filipino immigration to the United States. *Manong Benny* represents the wave of immigration that brought Filipino men to the United States who became the *manongs* [or elder males] of the generations to come. Manong Benny lived in the I-Hotel, the site of a legendary, decades-long housing struggle in San Francisco. Standing next to the first hero, Lapu Lapu, the two figures bring the ancient and recent past together.

Isang Gabi is a print that is inspired by a video project created by the Barrionics. The vanguard stylings of the Barrionics exemplify the latest developments in folk traditions, electronic music, and designed environment. This includes paintings, mixed media, video, and performance from its three members: [myself], artist, curator, and academic Rico Reyes, and composer Anne Perez. [Our] video, *Sarung Banggi*, from which the *Isang Gabi* image is drawn, has mythological elements of the universe, the romancing of deities, and mysterious figures.”

Johanna Poethig’s work crosses public and private realms influenced by the movements in art that blur the boundaries of public space, art, commodity, symbol, satire, social practice, performance, and cultural iconography. She engages in the problem solving of complex artistic processes that involve site, scale, time, social interaction, and materials. She grew up in The Philippines and has been active in the Filipino-American arts community since the 1980s. In November 2014 Poethig and composer Chris Brown installed their video/sound piece *Music of the Lost Cities* in Intramuros, the historic core of Manila, as part of Project Glocal, an experimental artist project in Asia. She is currently lead artist with Mildred

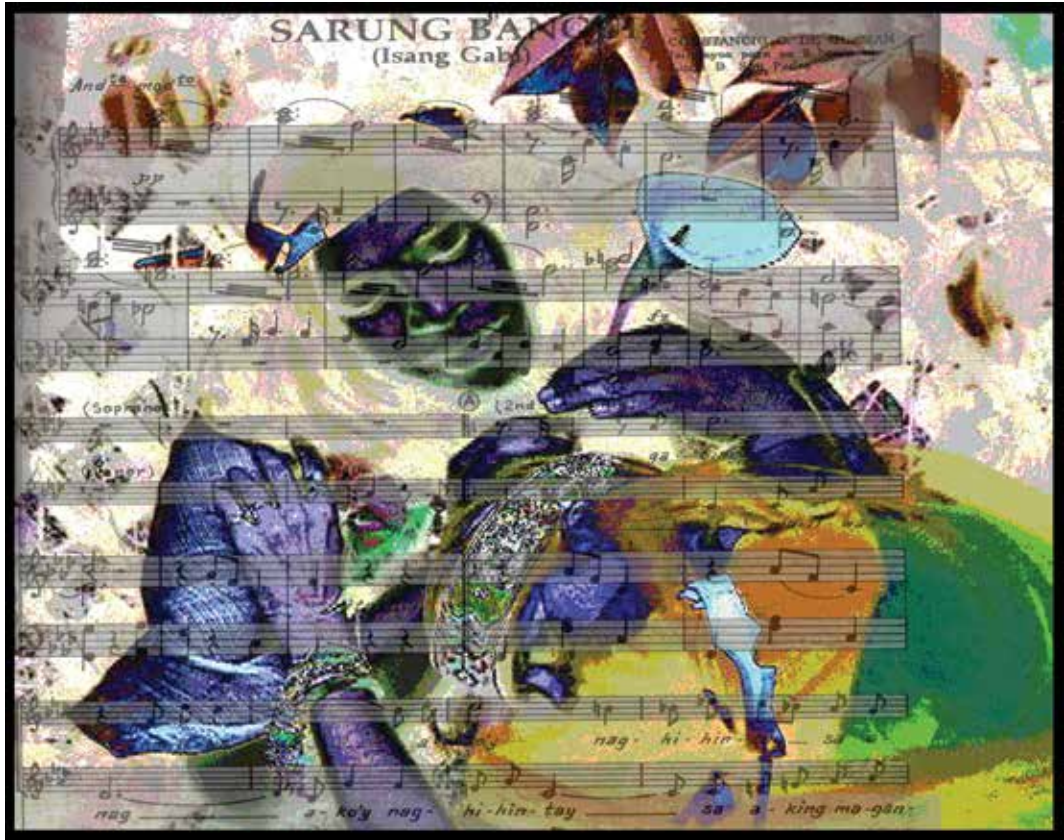
johanna poethig

Howard, Joyce Hsu, and Peter Richards on a major public art project to create integrated art for the thirty-four stations planned as part of the 9.5-mile East Bay Bus Rapid Transit system in Oakland, California. She has also been selected for the 2015 Creative Commons Curatorial Residency to curate *Glamorgeddon: The Spectacle* at SOMArts Gallery in San Francisco, California.

In 2012 Poethig participated in the annual *Artisterium* in Tbilisi, Georgia, exhibiting her work and doing a public art intervention of painted *Tire Totems* in Eliava Market, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi. Her other recent exhibitions include *Me Love You Long Time* at the Aljira Center for the Arts in Newark, New Jersey, and at the Boston Center for the Arts, Massachusetts; the Space Bi project at the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, California; and solo shows at Manilatown Heritage Center and Togonon Gallery, both in San Francisco. Poethig was part of the 2008 Yerba Buena Center for the Arts' (San Francisco) *Bay Area Now 5* with the Galleon Trade International Artist Exchange, for which she collaborated with Manila artist Noberto Roldan and writer Lourde de Veyra. She has shown at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Pro Arts in Oakland, and Berkeley Arts Center, all in California; The Bronx Museum, New York; and Taman Budaya in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, among many other venues. Poethig has created major works of public art throughout the Bay Area, Los Angeles, San Jose, and Stockton, all in California; Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; and Cuba. She is professor of painting and public art in the Visual and Public Art Department of California State University, Monterey Bay.

www.johannapoethig.com

johanna poe-thig



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isang gabi, 2011

*Digital print, 16 x 20 in. (40,6 x 50,8 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Oakland, California*

Next page:

lapu lapu and manong benny, 2014

*Digital print from a detail of the 1984 Ang Lipi no
Lapu Lapu mural, 30 x 20 in. (76,2 x 50,8 cm)
Courtesy of the artist, Oakland, California*



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