

# People and Events

## Filipino artist featured in Immigrants History Week

THE Foundation for Filipino Artists, Inc. in celebration of Immigrants History Week featured artist Fernando C. Kabigting at the Philippine Center last April 13, 2009 titled Creativity in Adversity.

Fernando Kabigting has been an artist for nearly five decades because of his passion in art. It was in his late teens when a schoolmate introduced him to painting, a past time he dabbled on his spare time but later on became a calling.

Kabigting was in his mid-twenties when he opened his first gallery. Being the only artist in his family, he did not have a wide exposure to other artists of the time although he did admire the works of Fernando Amorsolo. His first pieces varied from still life to landscapes, mostly on oil or charcoal.

It was in Iloilo where he had discovered his first batya (a wooden basin used to wash clothing in the early 1900's) which became his inspiration to several paintings. Countless one-man shows and exhibitions followed, but it was the batya exhibitions that were clamored for by both the art aficionados and critics alike. He took his batya paintings to New York in 1988 where he held his first one-man exhibition at the Philippine Consulate and was received with much acclaim.



Amidst tropic elegance, Acrylic 30" x 40"

captured feelings of his human frailty, of fear, uncertainty, and the madness of feeling trapped in a body that no longer functioned normally.

However, as he progressed to his current state, he discovered that painting in the abstract form had resurrected his joy of being an artist; it eventually allowed him to retrace his way to painting in the style that he was best known for, even working on portraits and batyas once again. Each new piece now carry more depth, as his failing eyesight present subjects more vividly, expressing emotions conveying life, love, and what it is to be human.

Kabigting has been married for 35 years, a father to two lovely daughters and a grandfather to a boy. He lives with his wife in Astoria, Queens where you will find him in his wheelchair holding on to his brushes as he ponders excitedly over possibilities each blank canvas presents.



Fernando Kabigting with wife Menchu (center) and daughters Patricia (left) & Karina (right)

In 1999, Kabigting suffered a stroke which left him partially paralyzed. His perseverance led him to once again pick up his brushes and do what he loved best. Working with physical conditions such as double vision and a half paralyzed body, he retained himself to paint left-handed. He never really tried his hand at the abstract form of artistic expression, but found the freedom it offered to be a healing balm, both physically and emotionally.

Pinned down by frustration and anger, the results that followed were astounding. Gone were the serene settings and his signature style; the new pieces captured feelings of his human frailty, of fear, uncertainty, and the madness of feeling trapped in a body that no longer functioned normally.

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## Cultural conversations with Paconla, Espinosa

IN an intriguing show, Davao City artists Victor Espinosa and Roger Paconla present works at the Philippine Center in an exhibit from April 27 to May 8, 2009.



The veteran Paconla, a native of Zamboanga del Sur, presents the vibrant colors of the indigenous peoples of the southern Philippines, in more traditional landscapes and figurative pieces. He has focused in his career on passing on his knowledge, conducting free art workshops to indigenous people and underprivileged children. An "Artist for the People" in the Davao community, he has held 32 solo shows.

Espinosa, who has exhibited in Vermont, NYC and NJ, Manila and Davao City, is the son of Pedro Espinosa, a contemporary of Paconla in Davao. Last year, Espinosa presented in NJ and Vermont works from 2003 to 2008, including a piece that one may think of as a counterpart to the vividly hued Gobelin tapestries of Paris, showcasing the themes of indigenous peoples, the preservation of heritage, and what the UN has focused on, promoting "interfaith and intercultural dialogue." Which just happens to be the title of one of his main pieces for this year.

Being exposed through a storybook project on the indigenous peoples of the Philippines, he is well aware of the role of cross-cultural dialogue, imbuing his works with immediacy. Somewhere between symbolist and surrealist, his colorful art as an expression of a specific people - i.e., folk art - comes to the fore, as he seeks to promote cultural awareness of their way of life. Dr. Loretta Osakwe has supported his exhibits as an advocate of interfaith discourse.

Bicol painter Pancho Piano, who specializes in stained glass work, joins them in this show.

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## THE COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**April 18|Saturday**  
FAHSI Seniors Program and LYFE Program Presents. 'Kwentuhan'

Take a break from school, work, partying, chillin' with friends, and kick back with your LOLA/ LOLO!

FAHSI Seniors Program and LYFE Program Presents.. 'Kwentuhan'

Bring your Lola/ Lolo to Fahsi Day! on Saturday April 18th at 3PM-7PM, Philippine American Center (185-14 Hillside Ave. Jamaica, NY 11432

V-Day, The Vagina Monologues  
V-Day is a movement to end violence

against women and girls that raises funds and awareness through benefit production of playwright/founder Eve Ensler's award winning play The Vagina Monologues. There will be two performances of Ensler's works: 5pm - "A Memory, A Monologue, A Rant and A Prayer"

Ticket Price: \$50 for each performance

This production is spearheaded by American Filipino women who give support to the "comfort women" of Asia who were brutalized during World War II, the National Federation of Filipino American

Associations Legal Defense Fund that supports American women in domestic violence situations and the women of the Democratic Republic of Congo who are victims of atrocious acts such as rape and genital mutilation. Save the Date! On Saturday, April 18, 2009, 5:00pm - 8:30pm at The Philippine Center, Kalayaan Hall 556 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY

Bistro Filipino Presents Blue Mango  
Enjoy the night of music & the sounds of Blue Mango on April 18, 9pm at Bistro Filipino 89-29 130th Street Richmond

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