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ROGUE



KING OF THE NORTH

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follows Rudy Fariñas
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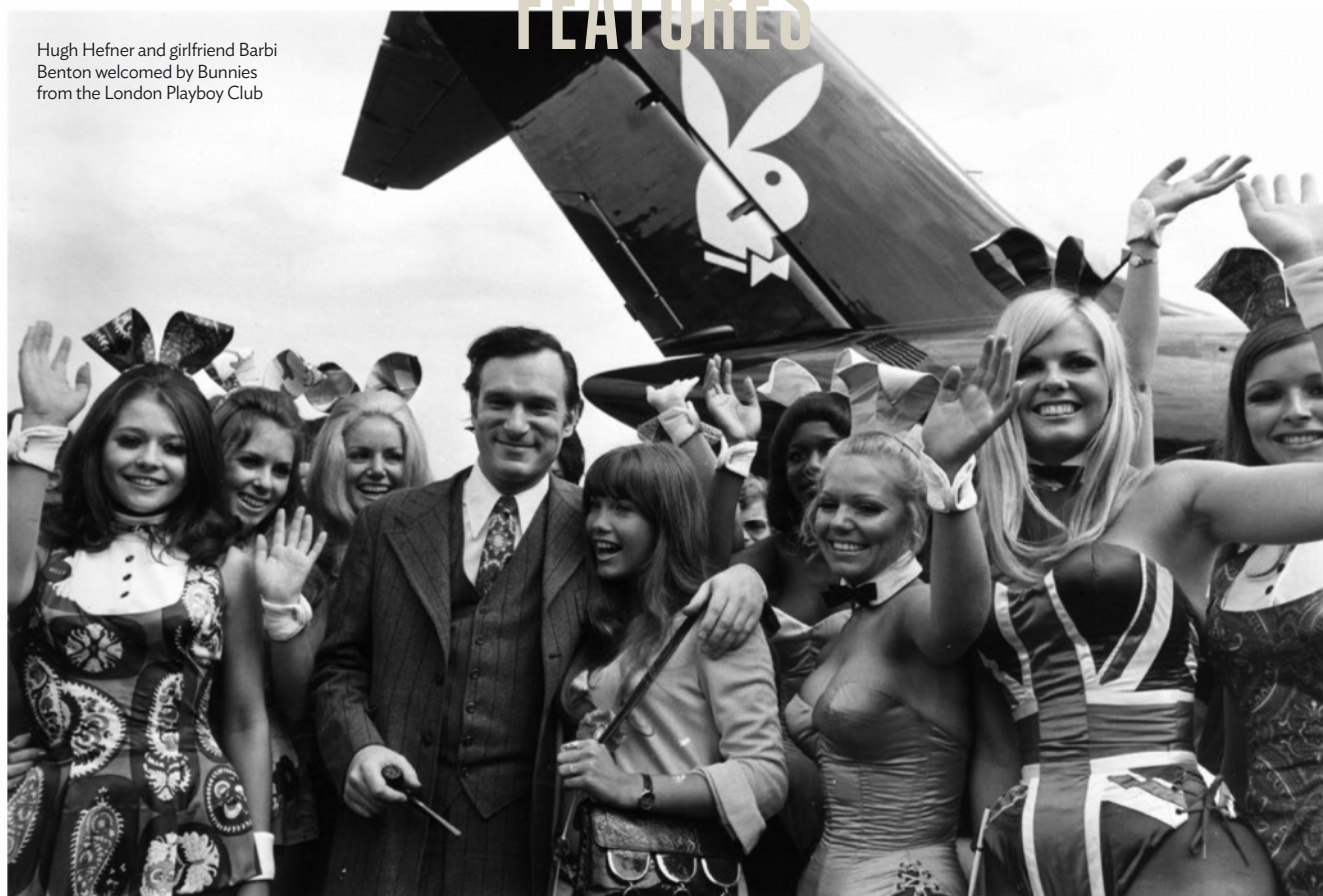
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ISSUE 106

THE EDITOR'S LETTER

February 2017

Rogue Ten

"If everything seems under control, you're not going fast enough."—Mario Andretti

Life is full of surprises. Just when you think you've seen it all, you realize you haven't. You don't need to look far to see the big surprises, and the small ones will sharpen your focus on their counterparts, which is a surprise in itself. Being asked to write this month's Editor's Letter is a case in this point, and so here it is, for good or ill.

I had two dreams, and both came true in the same year. The first was to have a family, and less than a month after 2007 rang in, my wife gave birth to the most precious thing that's ever happened to me: my daughter Camila. The other dream was to publish a magazine, even just for a month, according to the way I had for many years envisioned it.

It was a very good year for me; possibly the best to date. Any father will easily understand this, and so will anybody with an imagination. There are things that enter your life that you never want to lose; you want to love them and make them grow in the best way possible.

It's never an easy ride, though, this business of making dreams come true, and it doesn't get any easier when they do. I never understood that rancid fortune cookie that said *Be careful what you wish for, you just might get it*. I wished for it, didn't I? So why the hell wouldn't I want to get it?

Ten years later, I look back and see that although both dreams are still alive, I've lost them in a very substantial way, with enough grief and fatigue to ask myself some heavy questions. I also

see that other people—whole societies, in fact—are going through the same thing. The dreams may remain, but the realities are turning out to be less than ideal. You didn't expect the compromises you had to make, the losses you had to cut, in order to keep those dreams alive and smiling.

Nobody can foresee the future of *Rogue*. But events here and worldwide have proven that we now live in a time of frightening uncertainty, ruled by unpredictable men. From that perspective, "Rogue" should be more relevant than ever. As the saying goes, when the going gets weird, the weird turn pro. The magazine is a different animal now than when it started, but the key fact is that it is still here—and, miraculously, so am I.

The world is broken up into tribes that do what they will—the rich and poor, young and old, good and bad; activists, pundits, pacifists, hedonists, and fascists; liberals, conservatives, independents, hipsters, millennials, and intellectuals; the criminals and criminalized—let them all leave their mark on this earth, be they presidents or pothole plumbers.

Who is right? I have my own ideas, but I'll be goddamned if the next person I run into feels the same way. In this era, values have changed in ways that baffle even the most rational and lucid of minds. Thankfully, some things will remain certain in mine, including what this magazine was originally designed to do, what mark I hope it will leave, regardless of who charts its course or how many casualties are left in its wake.

In my humble opinion, this magazine is a small, 10-year-old chronicle of a Southeast Asian *terzo mondo* banana republic suffering from a

history of mental decompression sickness—with great beaches. *Rogue* is a funhouse mirror held up against this decade, and the distorted characters we used to proudly call our own now belong to the world. We've never pretended to know all the answers, but if we've learned anything from all the textbook cluster fucks we've managed to skirt through in the last decade, there will be a snarled series of plugs you'll have to pull to keep us from trying to find out.

I accidentally ran over a stray cat the other night, and I was overwhelmed with remorse—but it got me thinking about curiosity and how that word became a cornerstone of this magazine. *Rogue* was created under the assumption that its editors should never stop asking questions, and I guess that's what we've been trying to do for the last 10 years—and I hope we'll be trying to do for the next 10. Whether we've succeeded or not is a matter of opinion, at this point, but this is, I suppose, what our tribe does.

Right. I leave you with the first issue of our tenth year in precarious publication, and a verse from the perverse poet Fagen: *For one more time let your madness run with mine. Streets still unseen we'll find somehow, because there is no time better than now.*

Laissez les mal temps roulez.


JOSE MARI UGARTE
Founding Editor

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THE GUEST LIST

February 2017



Liezl Yap isn't sure if she should be writing this in the third person but is doing it anyway. She is a current freelance writer and the former editor-in-chief of *Yummy* magazine. In her spare time, she enjoys taking pictures, collecting vintage maps, and watching too much TV. You can find her on Instagram at @airplanedream.



Pam Quiñones is the Editor-in-Chief of *L'Officiel Manila* and is one of the most sought-after commercial and fashion stylists in the country today. In this issue, she styles the cover shoot with photographer Shaira Luna.



At Maculangan has attended cinematography workshops at the MOWELFUND Film Institute in the 1980 and has since devoted his talents to shooting elegant and evocative portrait photography guerilla-style.



Claire Jiao has been a journalist for five years and currently works for CNN Philippines, reporting on business and the economy and providing political commentary. She has profiled personalities such as Rodrigo Duterte, Bongbong Marcos, and Grace Poe.



Jam Pascual is a columnist for *Young Star* and former section editor for *Rogue*. He was also a fellow for poetry for the 15th IYAS National Writers' Workshop. His band Imelda is currently trying to finish its first full-length album.



Shaira Luna is a self-taught freelance fashion and advertising photographer based in Manila, Philippines. Try flipping through the closest local magazine: there is a 70 percent chance you'll see her name there.



Brian Sergio could be a pervert, a genius, or a hack — it all depends on whom you ask. His shocking photographs and zines have fueled arguments, fired imaginations, and launched careers. In this issue, he shoots model Jach Manere.



Steve Tirona has been shooting for *Rogue* since its early years, his pictures contributing immensely to the magazine's overall visual aesthetic. He currently resides in California.



Milo Sogueco is an award-winning filmmaker and photographer. Sogueco also actively supports independent cinema through his positions at the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board and Quezon City Film Development Commission.

Mookie Katigbak-Lacuesta hails from Manila, and has authored four books, including the two poetry collections *The Proxy Eros* and *Burning Houses*. In this issue, she discusses the transformation of Filipino erotic poetry.

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The precious engravings executed by hand by the greatest Italian master craftsmen in decorating the new **Luminor 1950 Sealand 3 Days Automatic Acciaio – 44mm** make this special edition dedicated by Panerai to the Year of the Rooster unique. The new timepiece is the ninth creation in the series launched by Officine Panerai in 2009 in honour of the fascinating tradition of the Chinese Zodiac. After the watches dedicated to the Ox, the Tiger, the Rabbit, the Dragon, the Snake, the Horse, the Goat and the Monkey, the new Luminor 1950 Sealand welcomes the Year of the Rooster which will begin on 28 January 2017.

The Rooster, one of the most energetic and determined signs of the Chinese Zodiac, symbolises the virtue of perseverance. Those born under this sign are convincing persuaders, courageous and creative, determined not to depend on the decisions of others, and at the same time they love to be the centre of attention. These distinctive traits associated with the sign of the Rooster are reflected in this new Special Edition which has a strong yet sophisticated character, displayed in the elegant engraving of the Rooster on the cover, its style inspired by traditional oriental iconography.



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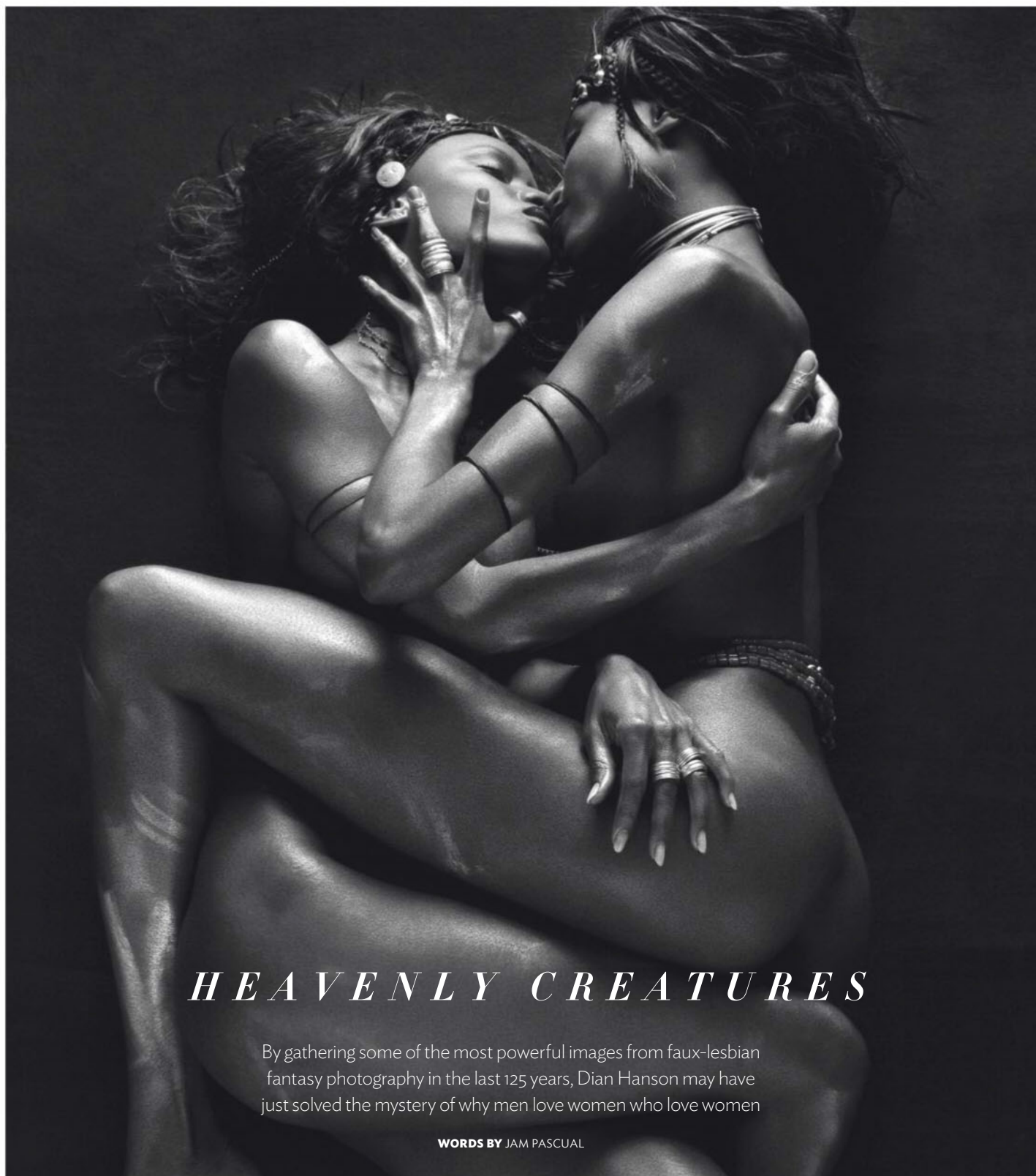
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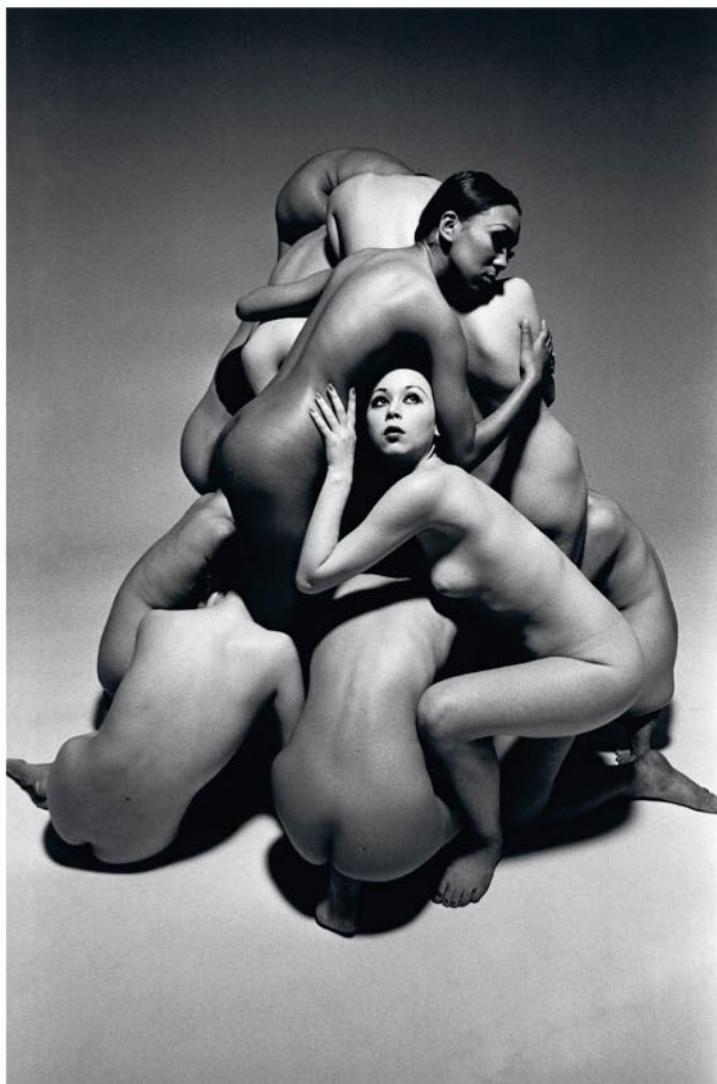
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HEAVENLY CREATURES

By gathering some of the most powerful images from faux-lesbian fantasy photography in the last 125 years, Dian Hanson may have just solved the mystery of why men love women who love women

WORDS BY JAM PASCUAL



GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS

From left: From *The Sixties* by Kishin Shinoyama; Monika and Martina on the Golden Couch by Guido Argentini. **Previous page:** Margareth and Prisca by Bruno Bisang.

WHAT IS IT about women making out with each other that make men shift to the edge of their seats? The new tome *Lesbians for Men* (Taschen) is a remarkable and stunning visual exploration of this age-old guilty pleasure, serving readers 300 pages of women kissing, touching, fondling a mouth, a thigh, a breast.

Dian Hanson, who has built her career understanding male sexuality from editing fetish magazines like *Juggs* and *Leg Show*, authors the coffee table book soon after the release of *Psychedelic Sex* (2015), her colorful work which catalogs men's magazines' attempt to recreate the acid sex trip of the 1970s. Hanson felt compelled to educate, hence *Lesbians for Men*. "Real sexual education is shockingly rare," she tells *The Huffington Post*. "When I see fantasy repeated so often it becomes truth, I have to step in." For Hanson, men's lesbian fantasies are disconnected from reality. The women who embody these fantasies—also the women in the book—are actually straight, and are posing as lesbians to titillate men.

Hanson's text offers to contextualize and explain why and how this fantasy that makes men invisible and powerless as spectators began and has become so pervasive. Informed

by research and accounts from history books as well as her male readers who have confided their sex lives to her, Hanson crosses the serious implications of this faux lesbian portrayal and the lightness of our sexual delights and curiosities. She does this by repurposing erotic and pornographic photographs taken from past decades to present times.

Those taken in the 60s and 70s call to mind the feminists who encouraged women to have sex and who defended women's right to orgasm, to explore their sexuality with other women—an exercise of power, no doubt—and to show men that they are not needed. After all, those photos are fruits of that period's norms and taste. Most men were elated by such adventures, which led the porn industry to produce lucrative girl-on-girl scenes.

Some of the republished images can be classified as pornography, some erotica: women's breasts and genitals having a session in Ellen Stagg's picture, while Kishin Shinoyama's black-and-white image uses light and shadow to illuminate his subjects whose poses conceal their private parts. And there are hybrids too, as done

by Japan's lauded Nobuyoshi Araki; his artfulness comes with the color story and the drama he wrenches out in a given instant. *The Huffington Post* describes *Lesbians for Men* as a "compelling look at

the history of faux-lesbian fantasy photography and the practice's relationship to the male gaze."

While the book makes no secret of its intended audience, it can be enjoyed by the curious and open-minded—whichever sexual persuasion they may adhere to. Some parts would greatly serve those looking only for sexual arousal while the rest of the pages possess a more apparent artistry and narrative. It is just as much about women, female sexuality, erotica, and the rise of the porn industry as it is about men and their evolving sexual taste—passing no judgment on the men who have taken a liking to lesbian porn or erotica, or the women who have engaged in it on a whim or for financial gain. But perhaps the book's greatest achievement is that it captures the development of the lesbian fantasy—in image after magnificent image—while exploring the cyclical connection of sexual icons and human desire. ■



BREMONT

The ALT1-C/PW chronograph was Bremont's first non-limited edition polished steel watch forming part of the core collection. In a very short period of time, this chronometer has become an important and successful part of the Bremont watch range.

As a natural extension of the line, Basel 2016 sees the launch of the ALT1-C/PB. This attractive chronometer has a wonderful black dial with beautifully polished applied numerals. The dial is off-set with two dark grey subtly etched sub-dials. Whilst its white dialled sibling has the exquisitely made black hour and minute hands, the ALT1-C/PB has newly designed polished nickel hands with carefully integrated Super-LumiNova® for legibility at night. As with all core collection timepieces, this polished steel case will undergo a similar hardening treatment, providing high impact resistance but still retaining its polished surface finish. The signature coating gives the watch case excellent toughness, good wear and high impact fatigue resistance, a technique used widely in the aerospace industry.

Bremont Co-Founder, Nick English, commented: "The ALT1-C was the first watch we ever designed at the company's inception all of those years ago. It has proved to be a trusty and very well loved part of the Bremont family. Complementing this signature range with the polished ALT1-C/PW went down very well indeed and we anticipate this being the same for its new black counterpart. They are certainly very handsome timepieces."

MAJESTY BY THE LAKE

Lake Como has a newly minted crown jewel in the stunning new retreat by Patricia Urquiola

WORDS BY JAM PASCUAL



FUN FACT: THE MUSIC video for Gwen Stefani's 2004 hit single "Cool" was filmed on the banks of Lake Como, Italy. One might recall shots of vertical gardens and the shining surface of the Lombardy lake, permeated by a hazy, dream-like texture.

Filmmaking magic aside, Lago di Como has always been known for its tranquil atmosphere, as evidenced by the myriad cultural figures—from American writer Ernest Hemingway to Roman magistrate Pliny the Younger—who've referenced it in their works, visited it, and built around the location, in awe of a kind of beauty only the lake could provide.

Thus, when multi-award-winning architect and designer Patricia Urquiola was called upon to design a new hotel by the river, her task was not only to come up with a retreat as formidable as the ones that have existed for centuries, but to also work with Como's surroundings. The architecture must not overpower the river, the greenery, the general scene; it must be the lens through which visitors might gaze upon the scene anew. Hotel Il Sereno (ilsereno.com) is the product of this delicate design philosophy.

THE ART OF HARMONY

Clockwise: The lobby lounge of Il Sereno; the hotel facade designed by Patricia Urquiola; a view of the lake from the terrace; table at the hotel's restaurant.





Upon entering the lobby, you're immediately struck by the hotel's central staircase, made from bronze and walnut wood. These colors and materials are not accidents—in general, Urquiola ensured that Il Sereno's interiors would reflect Como's rich surroundings; hence, the earthy tones and gentle pastels.

The best place to enjoy the Como scenery is on Il Sereno's main terrace, which is lined with nest chairs and accented with vertical gardens created by French botanist Patrick Blanc. This is where you go to meditate, to soak in the quiet. Here, you'll have a view of the lake, and on the other side, a nearby town by the shore, dotted with terracotta roofs.

But if you want to get closer to the water, you have the option of either Il Sereno's freshwater infinity

pool or its private beach, where you can take out one of its two Ernesto Riva-crafted mahogany and cedar motorboats. Lake Como has always been prime real estate for hotels and resorts but one would be hard-pressed to find any other place that allows you to just take a boat and speed around the lake at your leisure. And if Il Sereno's 30 well-appointed suites don't do it for you, the Villa Pliniana palazzo, which is just a ferry ride away, where the Sereno Group holds special events, might be more your speed.

In an interview with *Condé Nast Traveler*, Urquiola says the hotel and palazzo are “in constant dialogue with the mountain behind and the lake in front.” Indeed, there is a sense of harmony to Il Sereno, which inevitably bewitches whosoever wishes to retreat within or outside its walls. ■



THE SOUND AND THE FURY

A group of artists previews its creation for this year's Art Fair Philippines, an exhibit that requires everything but the eyes

WORDS BY ALY CABRAL

"WHY SO SERIOUS?" ASKS ERWIN ROMULO. We are in his neighbor's house amid paintings and sculptures calmly lit by the afternoon sun. The neighbor is an art collector, and coincidentally, Romulo is talking about the upcoming Art Fair Philippines where he's curating one of the exhibits.

He says the plan is to put up something the kids will like. This year, he and his co-conspirators are organizing a group exhibit revolving around the one thing most people take for granted in art: sound.

Sound art is still "a minority tradition," according to Tad Ermitaño, a member of the pioneering sound art group Children of Cathode Ray. "It's still not very well known or understood in the Philippines. That's the whole point of [the exhibit], to frame and present this minority tradition in Art Fair Philippines, where it has not really been done."

Over beers in an aftershow in Cubao Expo where they organized a performance by sound artists from Hong Kong, Ermitaño and his fellow artists Tengal Drilon (the co-curator of the exhibit), Erick Calilan, and Mark Rambo Macatangay describe their Art Fair Philippines piece as something "like an abstract painting," with different colors and textures that come together.

What seems like an occasional blip on the radar of Philippine contemporary art is actually just lying underneath it this whole time, fueled by a community of sound

artists and machine builders questioning and reinventing the radar itself. For instance, in the 2015 Art Fair Philippines, Ermitaño built an interactive installation displaying live weevils feeding on the pith of a tree log, and headphones playing a recording of the weevils, which the audience could interact with and hear, respectively, through an audiovisual program. A year later, artist Ian Carlo Jaucian displayed clocks on one of the fair's walls, rigged with sensors that made the hands speed up whenever a person examined the clocks closely.

Flashback to 2008 when the WSK Festival of the Recently Possible, with Drilon as director, came into full force. Today, it semi-annually gathers local and international sound and visual artists in analog and digital machine festivities. The WSK community, as it is often called, has been making a lot of noise for years now—albeit drowned out by the more traditional visual art that monopolizes the white walls of galleries and the cultural consciousness of average art goers.

One of the editions of the WSK festival gathered several artists for a human-robot orchestra called Relay, showcasing homemade instruments and kinetic contraptions integrated with visual performances. Built by the artists, the machines contained interactive components for the audience. The orchestra, along with the machines that embody the continuing developments of the artists' practice, inspired the making of WSK's group exhibit for this February's Art Fair Philippines.

The aspect of interactivity can only be based on sound art's ability to foster a communal experience, such as in a concert, a tribal musical ritual, or a group exhibit of human-operated, sound-making machines. This, along with sound art's relative novelty next to other forms, is precisely what makes the nature of the medium exciting and experimental.

"There's not a whole lot of historical or critical baggage that comes with [sound art]," says Ermitaño. "We can just go there and it's just like colors—colors of sound or whatever. It's possible to be enjoyed on a completely naive level. And we're perfectly satisfied that it's enjoyed on that level. The children can enjoy it."

They did say that they want to be the Kidzania of Art Fair Philippines. "The idea is that this will be an experience," says Drilon. "You go there, you can interact, maybe you can see new things. You

sell the experience, not the artwork per se." For Romulo, the nice thing about having an art fair isn't buying and selling art. "I always liked that for a price of a ticket, you get to see a lot of art in one place," he says. "You don't have to go to so many galleries. Who has the time? So in a way, I wanted something that the kids would like."

"You want to give a good experience to the people who can't buy art," he adds. "Which is most of us."

While the Relay robot orchestra celebrated the relationship of humans and machines, WSK's Art Fair Philippines group exhibit—which as of yet is untitled—aims to reiterate the importance of collaboration within the art community. What used to be a concert of robots has now grown into a jungle of sound-creating organisms with a central brain, or unit, as the men describe it. The machines, skills, and personalities of Romulo and company, which includes Ian Carlo, Pow Martinez, DJ Caliph8 (a.k.a. Arvin Nogueras), and Joe Mejias will all come together to create an ecosystem of sounds.

They are mum about the actual concept of the exhibit. It's apparently a tape, a sound file, a potential source of embarrassment, a tool for satire, an Easter egg, and a red herring all at once. "It's an experiment. What happens when you give people this sound file?" says Drilon.

The exhibit will utilize the sound file in question as raw material, but Drilon insists it's not the point of the whole thing. "The concept doesn't just rely on the tape but also on the personalities and practices of the people involved. It's about the idea of having a group that can work together, to see if there is something that can come out of the idea." That's what a "relay" is, after all, Ermitaño explains. "When something gets passed on, it doesn't stay the same. It transforms. It changes. It gets filtered through the personalities and practices of the people involved."

Artistic and personality differences aside, the sound artists agree on giving kids what they want: a video they can put on Snapchat, a sculpture they can touch, a machine they can play with, a Monet they can punch. ■

Art Fair Philippines, February 16–19, 2017. 5/F, 6/F, 7/F Rooftop, The Link Carpark, Ayala Center, Makati, artfairphilippines.com/en

UNUSUAL FARE

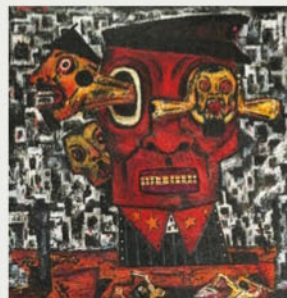
From unforgiving abstracts to savage surrealisms, this year's Art Fair is set to outdo itself. Here's a preview.



SUGARLESS BABYLON BY BEEJAY ESBER



LIFE IS HARD COS YOU ARE UGLY
BY CHALK ZALDIVAR



SYRIA BY CHARLIE CO



BRAINWASH BY DON SALUBAYBA

THE HARDEST HITS

Even the Worst Year Ever had its good moments—nearly all of them in film. So before Oscar does his thing, we take a look back and pick our favorite flicks from the lineup

WORDS BY JOSE MARI UGARTE



AS THE 89TH Academy Awards Ceremony prepares to honor the best motion pictures from a very notorious year this coming February 26, and while the critics have already voiced their own opinions—not to mention it's already 2017—we feel that even more praise is due for 2016's best films.

The following list is the result of the aggregate averaging of the opinions of various international film critics, as well as local cinephiles and filmmakers who have had the good fortune to see these films and more. It is by no means a completely authoritative list (we'll leave that to Mocha Uson), but a general reflection of the consensus.

Without further adieu, we bring you the 10 films that surpassed all the hype. ■

1 MANCHESTER BY THE SEA

This movie will break you. No other film this year will make you feel as much as this one will, with Casey Affleck being nothing less than a beast of a performer, portraying an intensely complex character with powerful delivery, bringing to stinging reality what is the year's best screenplay. It's the real grief and pain you feel in the story that draws you into the lives of these characters in a way you thought could no longer be possible in cinema, but director Kenneth Lonergan manages to pull it off masterfully.

2 LA LA LAND

On Manchester's flip-side is a movie 2016, with all its downers and negativity, desperately needed—a redefinition of the big-screen musical, with original songs set against a technicolored present-day Los Angeles you've never seen—or heard—before. This movie is a joy to behold and will make even the most cynical of moviegoers feel like dancing. Damien Chazelle has now officially established himself as a force to be reckoned with in Hollywood with a movie that will take several viewings to fully enjoy the many things it has to offer.

3 MOONLIGHT

This is the most beautiful film of the year, with a score and color palette that creates its unique, dream-like look, a respectful bow to its cinematography, which manages to find great beauty where you least expect it. An untold story told perfectly by Barry Jenkins.

4 20TH CENTURY WOMEN

As the title might suggest, this is the best cast of the year, with a chemistry that works so well it gives Annette Bening all the tools she needs to hammer out one of the saddest and most hilarious performances of the year. It's wonderful to see what she's got, and she's got it strong.



5 SING STREET

With its captivating charm and depiction of youth, love, and rock and roll, this is the kind of movie John Carney is so good at making you fall in love with. But it is its position as this year's definitive 80s rock/pop nostalgia film that lands it on our Top Ten.

6 CAPTAIN FANTASTIC

This indie stands out as an off-the-grid hippie fantasy filled with gorgeous natural surroundings punctuated now and then by outrageous moments, all entered around what could very well be Viggo Mortensen's most passionate performance to date, playing a single father of six kids doing his best to hold everything together despite the flaws of being himself.

7 THE LOBSTER

Like Being John Malkovich and *Birdman* before it, Greek director Yorgos Lanthimos's film is the strangest bird in last year's flock. But also like its two predecessors, it is one of the year's funniest and profound films, a rare and wild shot in the dark that manages to make it every few years, despite its defiantly absurd premise and plot.

8 PATERSON

Jim Jarmusch, once again, hypnotises us into entering his existential cinematic mind, this time taking over *Paterson*, New Jersey with a lead character named Paterson, played by Adam Driver. The film asks the deep questions of life and its meaning by exploring the mundane patterns of human existence and how they could possibly mean something more than just mere coincidence.

9 ELLE

Isabelle Huppert's breakthrough performance is what makes this film one of the best of the year, led by a cast of actors directed by Paul Verhoeven. It is a most perversely hilarious yet legitimate suspense film you will see in quite some time.

10 TONI ERDMANN

Maren Ade's latest film is an exercise in directorial perfection, proving that a story of a father and daughter, when expertly portrayed, can clearly illustrate both the complex things that divide them and the complex things that tie them together. With a wonderful rhythm, it explores extremely relevant ideas without straining your head.

THOUGHT FOR FOOD

The rise of the “foodie” has also revealed greater socio-economic issues when it comes to cuisine. Maybe it’s time to actually watch what we eat

WORDS BY LIEZL YAP

THE INTERNET HAS ruined everything. Social media has single-handedly changed the way we eat, inundating us with tasty videos of calorie bombs, top 10 lists of every dish from ramen to chocolate cake, and dime-a-dozen tabletop shots on Instagram. It’s strange that eating has become a cultural obsession when it’s something that everyone does every day. Yet here we are.

Food has invaded pop culture. New restaurants are opening at a dizzying pace and everyone’s “into food” these days. It’s practically a universal preoccupation. You are what you eat, sure, but how did food become such a vital part of one’s identity, or worse, an indication of status or the cachet you possess?

No one eats out without first consulting the internet and the food *cognoscenti*, and the result is a strangely homogenous restaurant culture where everyone mostly eats at the same places here and abroad, and where establishments all look disappointingly similar.

We latch on to what works and ride it into the ground. Perhaps it’s time for a moratorium on Machuca tiles when even a fast-food chain like Chowking uses them. It’s but one example of these vignettes which are total Instagram bait, so these trends will no doubt continue.

Sometimes it becomes a pissing contest too, with shallow preoccupations about getting good pictures for Instagram (guilty as charged), or being the first to try a newly opened restaurant (so you can complain about the service and declare you’ll never go back—because, sure, expecting restaurants to be firing on all cylinders immediately after they open is realistic), or snagging an in-demand reservation at a World’s 50 Best establishment. Social media has blown the act of eating and the pleasures of food out of

proportion, making us forget what should matter and what truly bears weight.

Eating out is in its own way a form of escapism, but it’s hypocritical to say we love food and at the same time stay complacent about real, urgent food-related issues like aging farmers, global warming, hunger, and malnutrition.

And yet this obsession with food thrives on the idea of excess, at least for those who can afford it. Turkey isn’t good enough on its own, let’s stuff it with duck and chicken. Let’s wrap everything in bacon, dip it in batter, and deep-fry it! Milkshakes? Dump an embarrassment of sweets on top, everything from caramel popcorn to cotton candy, and finish with syrup dripping down the sides of the glass. It’s a diabetes death wish, but who cares, right? Order it for the ‘gram.

Even something as simple as a boodle fight—rice, meat, and seafood laid out on a table covered with banana leaves, where everyone eats with their hands—has been elevated to Instagram-worthy heights. This stripped-down practice has its origins in the military, but in this day and age, you’ve got caterers doing boodle fights for their clients that are styled with clay pots, floral centerpieces, and miniature *babay kubo*. Cutlery is provided, too. It looks beautiful, yet the original spirit of the meal and the context in which it is rooted has been lost in the process, foregone to accommodate the modern-day prerequisites of flat lay food porn. What is it all for? Everyone says that the real power of food lies in its ability to bring people together, but we’ve strayed so far from that.

Marketing execs have hijacked terms like “artisanal” and “farm-to-table,” distorting them beyond recognition. These artisans, producers, and farmers built the foundation of the food



WORTH YOUR SALT

Launched by chef Massimo Bottura (bottom) in Rio de Janeiro, Refettorio Gastronomica used only surplus food from the Olympic Games

Perhaps it's time for a moratorium on Machuca tiles when even a fast-food chain like Chowking uses them.



BIGGER FISH TO FRY

Cooking up change is what these food initiatives are all about.

FOOD FOR THE SOUL

Chef Massimo Bottura's nonprofit isn't a charity project: it's a cultural one, changing how we think about food by opening community kitchens and turning surplus that would otherwise be wasted into healthy meals (foodforsoul.it).

SAGANA PROJECT

Founded just last year, SaGana's MO is simple: they head over to Smokey Mountain to teach the families who live there how to cook healthy vegan meals on-site and without a ton of equipment brought in (facebook.com/saganaproject).

WORLD CENTRAL KITCHEN

Chef José Andrés isn't new to effecting change, with his organization making its mark in Haiti, Zambia, Nicaragua, among others by providing clean cookstoves, building school kitchens, and giving culinary training (worldcentralkitchen.org).

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANGELO DAL BO



industry but we've turned them into mere buzzwords and trends. Could we perhaps take some of the misplaced energy that surrounds this cultural obsession and use it to solve real problems? Surely we can do better than merely pretending they don't exist. I look at Osteria Francescana chef patron Massimo Bottura who's on a crusade to fight food waste, or at New York restaurateur Danny Meyer who is improving

wages and working conditions for his employees in innovative ways, and I wonder who's going to take up the fight on our shores.. Social media gives us the license to be narcissistic and self-absorbed, forgetting there's a bigger world outside this bubble and outside ourselves. It's inconvenient to care, so far too often we focus on the wrong things. Where does that leave us? The future looks bleak—and it's something a VSCO filter can't fix. ■

ANTONYMS FOR SORROW

Gian Lao's debut book of poetry collects eight years worth of attempts to tread the thin line between one's inner life and the world that influences it

WORDS BY JAM PASCUAL



Less than two weeks after Typhoon Haiyan struck, a fisherman waits for a catch off the coastline of Eastern Samar, the Philippines, Nov. 20, 2013.

IT IS FITTING THAT the epigraph of *All the Winters of My Body* begins with an excerpt of “The Lost Hotels of Paris” by American poet Jack Gilbert. In this poem, the persona reconciles himself with the ephemeral nature of things—from the half-life of romantic love to Greek islands going underwater, coming to a conclusion that implies peace, or something similar: “We look up at the stars and they are / not there. We see the memory / of when they were, once upon a time. / And that too is more than enough.”

Barring how tiresome the stars-actually-not-being-there image can be, let this epigraph act as an invitation. For those who are familiar with Gilbert’s work, readers can expect Lao to display an admirable sense of emotional control in approaching his subjects—from the sweeping firmament, to the emotional interior that drives us to look at the stars at all.

All the Winters of My Body contains eight years worth of Lao’s poetry, but do not misconstrue this debut as mere biography. On the birth of his book and the power of his chosen medium, Lao makes this point: “Poetry forces me to look at myself and assess my own emotional state. It’s a good way of making sure that you’re not taking a superficial approach to ‘healing your wounds.’” One can then take this collection as a treatise to how various emotional states—from joy to sorrow and the spectrum between—and the conditions that produce them, recur relentlessly through the movements of living.

The first section of the book, *Slow Dances with Distance*, exhibits a sense of intimacy,

demonstrated by the constant presence of a “you,” a general or specific addressee. Here, the granularities of particular experiences take center stage (“Remember that talk? / The gulls? The Baskin Robbins in winter?”) and we begin at what can be called ground zero of Lao’s perceptions of closeness and, well, distance. One may be tempted to view references to faraway places like Vladivostok and Stockholm as simply icing on the cake, though I think these shoutouts serve to prove that Lao’s approach to melancholy operates even on a spatial level. Otherwise, *Slow Dances with Distance* begins with an “I”-centric perspective, and expands its purview from there.



The sections that follow demonstrate this gradual act of zooming-out. Meanwhile the *World Aches* sheds its light on the larger forces that create or amplify sorrow, and how the self is rocked from its equilibrium as a result—from the large-scale destruction caused by Yolanda (“I try to use the word *death* / but I only remember: / I’ve seen more paintings of sunsets / than sunsets.”) to how the death of a close friend can devastate (“Now I cannot know / the weather that took your last breath.”). The *Brink of Loss*, the section that comes after, continues the trajectory of expansion. This is especially prevalent in the poem “Political Economy,” wherein the reader might find themselves getting more comfortable with Lao’s propensity to proclaim sweeping truths. “There is an entire world / of closed fists because we can’t agree / about happiness. Isn’t that simple / and difficult?”

It helps to go back to Lao’s motivations

to curate the contents of and release *All the Winters*. Factors of upheaval: six years of working in government, making way for a new administration. While Lao admits that injustice doesn’t take “a starring role in [his] current political purview,” he also cites Jack Gilbert’s “A Brief for Defense,” which I would argue implies that in the thick of political turmoil, the answer is not *just* ideology or policy. He quotes this passage: “We must risk delight [...] / We must have / the stubbornness to accept our gladness in the ruthless / furnace of this world. To make injustice the only / measure of our attention is to praise the Devil.” One can’t help but admire the self-reflexivity at work here.

The fourth section of the book, entitled *All the Room for Loss*, is in my opinion the strongest, and where Lao’s concerns are at their most metaphysical. Joy, sorrow, grief and bliss are sublimated as components of reality itself, and not simply products of shared experiences. In “For When the Heart Tears Into Itself,” we find the author referencing an Old World and a “nameless God of libraries.” And in “Above,” we are treated to this piece of advice: “The world is a beautiful place / and we are overwhelmed / by default. All that’s left / is choosing which parts of it / to carry into death.”

I will leave it to interested readers to be properly clinched by the concluding poem of the book, but let it be made clear here that *All the Winters* is an impressive release. It is a book that does not preach or prescribe, but gently asks us to assess both our inner lives, and the external forces that compel us to turn our gaze inward. And if a poem can do that, well, it’s hard to demand much else. ■



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HOLY SMOKES

Cigar in one hand, a glass of Scotch in the other, the connoisseur of fine single malt whisky finds a new home away from home in Discovery Primea's 1824



Scotch, nouveau Japanese and Chinese whisky, Kentucky bourbon: over a hundred bottles of the finest liquid gold from around the world line the shelves of 1824 at Discovery Primea (6749 Ayala Avenue, Makati City; 955-8888; discoveryprimea.com).

Named in honor of the year the first liquor license was granted, this understated urban hideaway showcases the best of spirits beyond its prized collection of whiskies; note the refined selection of cognacs, wines, and

champagnes on its menu.

Cigars are stars of this bar too, and 1824 boasts some of the most recognizable names in premium tobaccos, from the Philippines all the way to Cuba—Cohiba, Montecristo, Punch, Ramon Allones, and Tabacalera, to name a few. Light one up the old-fashioned way: custom-produced cedar spills are cleaner than a match or disposable lighter, while a butane lighter emits a more efficient flame.

The celebrated combination of

cigars and whisky is complemented with a third element: food. For a truly indulgent dining experience, feast on the Oyster Fricassee, pasta made with French oysters and topped with caviar.

Whisky and cigar lovers will feel right at home here, but with an ambiance that encourages quality conversation and a chance to unwind after a long day at work, 1824 is for anyone looking for that quiet little corner in the city to while the hours away. —PATRICIA CHONG

WHISKY AND STICK

1824's collection of cigars and whiskies from around the world is unrivalled. The latter is displayed prominently around the bar (top).



February 2017

EDITED BY
DEVI
DE VEYRA

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SPACE

DESIGN + INTERIORS + ARCHITECTURE + TECHNOLOGY



After years of the high life as a top polo player and inveterate lothario, Ricky Yabut settles in the blissful surrounds of his Calatagan sanctuary.

WORDS BY DEVI DE VEYRA PHOTOS BY AT MACULANGAN

DEN OF CURIOSITIES

Yabut likes to collect antiques, crafts and other curiosities, some of which he found around Calatagan. *Opposite:* Apart from spending time in his studio, the homeowner is also known to cook for friends.





IN FEBRUARY 25, 1986, two men were caught in a brutal tailspin that foreshadowed the end of an era in local politics. Then president Ferdinand Marcos was holed up in Malacañang, frantically rallying support in the last, desperate hours of his rule. Former Makati mayor Nemesio Yabut Sr. was in his death bed, in and out of a coma after suffering a massive heart attack.

While Marcos remained delusional to the very end, Yabut Sr. faced the inevitable outcome of his fate square in the eye. “He knew it was over for Marcos when they called for a snap election,” Ricky Yabut disclosed. During the quiet evenings in the elder Yabut’s hospital room, father and son would hold their last conversations and start letting go of their dreams together. “I don’t think I’m going to make it anymore,” Yabut Sr. told his son, “forget about politics, go get married.” “That was like night-and-day for him...he was always telling me not to get married,” Yabut said.

Makati’s controversial mayor, known for his business and political acumen, not to mention his womanizing, would breathe his last in the wee hours of February 25. Marcos’ humiliating exit would unfold toward midnight of the same day.

The ex-mayor’s heirs were left a substantial fortune, and would come face-to-face with the harsh post-Marcos realities. “It was very difficult; we had a pretty hard time, so my mother decided to yank all the boys to the US. We were there for six months before we came back,” Yabut recalled.

“After he died, I decided, in his memory, I’ll go ahead with politics, knowing very well what the outcome was going to be. I knew I wasn’t going to win. After that, I put it aside... you know, that’s done. Then I went back to what I loved most, horses,” Yabut said.

With the horses came the women. “I would say, I was pretty faithful (to his then wife, Cita Revilla) until three years into my marriage, when I was 29. This is just like my dad, who was a ladies man. You know, there were just too many girls all over the place. They’re the ones *pa* that come after him. I was



Above: The murals that flank the main entrance to Cortijo del Charro were commissioned by the homeowner. **Below:** The carving is part of an ongoing project titled *Maskarasutra*.

his assistant for four or five years. So, you see it and they know that you're the son of the mayor and they're coming after you also. You get used to it, and you're not going to shoo them away. The thing is, when I got back into polo, it was the same way. But I had my own identity; I wasn't the son of the mayor. I was Ricky Yabut, the polo player."

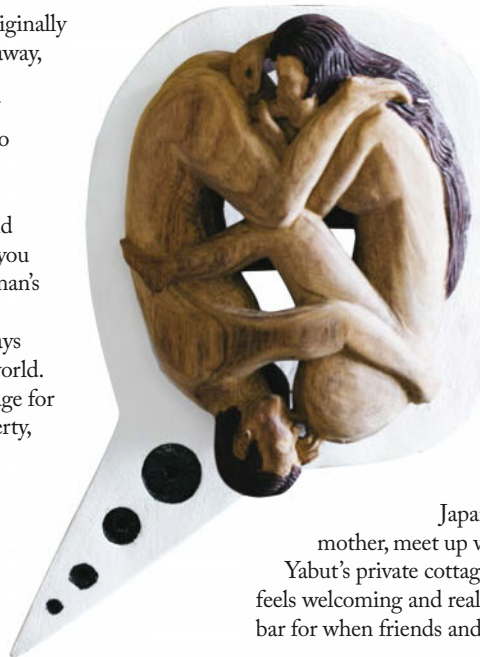
Apart from their shared love of women, both father and son remained grounded to reality despite the trappings of wealth and power, and didn't balk at making big, difficult decisions. Yabut quit polo at his peak, split up with his wife after years of trying to save his marriage, and stopped womanizing a few years into his fifties. "I got myself in all sorts of trouble, and then, you have to be realistic. You realize you can't do what you used to do and it's not as much fun. You just say, it's time to hang it up."

Nowadays, Yabut spends most of his time in Cortijo del Charro or House of the Horseman, a bed-and-breakfast that sits atop a hill in

Calatagan, Batangas. Originally meant as a weekend getaway, he built it from scratch and decorated it himself saying "I just wanted it to be a complete reflection of myself."

A quick glance around Cortijo del Charro tells you that it is indeed a horseman's house, filled with tokens from his polo-playing days and travels around the world. He added a private cottage for himself within the property, next to a studio where Yabut makes furniture and sculptures.

"I've no problems staying here, even by myself. I enjoy it, I like the solace. My



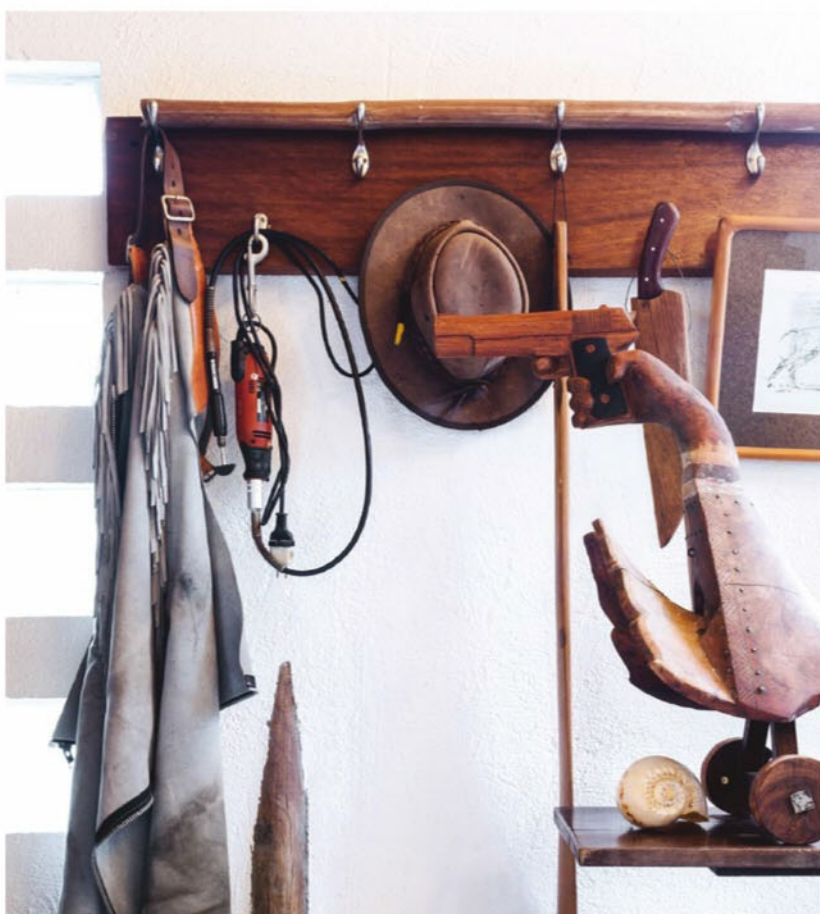
weekends are pretty busy, because my girlfriend, who is a doctor, my friends, my neighbors, come in on Friday. And they're gone on Sunday or Monday. Then I have time for my art, to do things, you know, for myself."

He would occasionally drive to Makati to "have a *sosyal* meal...have

Japanese food, steak, visit my

mother, meet up with my kids."

Yabut's private cottage, though more Spartan, feels welcoming and real. There's a makeshift bar for when friends and family come over



From top: Tokens from Yabut's travels as a top international polo player can be found around the house; "She represents all the women I slept with," Yabut said of the blue female figure atop a rocking horse; The homeowner makes furniture and sculptures in his spacious studio.



for drinks; religious relics and found objects sit atop side tables that bookend the bed. Framed family photos keep Yabut company.

Cortijo del Charro encapsulates Yabut's character, but his studio is a mirror to his soul. His personal manifesto is inscribed on its walls: This man owes gratitude to his father, loyalty to his mother, affection to his children, love to his woman . . . and to the world, his talent. Yabut's provocative *Maskarasutra* carvings line one wall, while *The Running of the Bull*, a herd of wooden trophy heads, sentinel a door. A blue naked woman astride a rocking horse alludes to Yabut's twin passions of the past. Masks depicting various political personalities seem to be in congress on one side of the room.

The massive doors to his studio bear the lyrics to the song *Batang Makati*, especially composed for Yabut Sr.'s 60th birthday. "Cortijo del Charro is my sanctuary, but Makati is where my heart is, because of my father." ■

DECADENCE AND DISASTER

Takashi Kuribayashi provokes
a privileged audience with
cheeky bravado

WORDS BY DEVI DE VEYRA



TAKASHI KURIBAYASHI RETURNS to Singapore for his second collaboration with luxury brand Hermès. The Japanese artist's exhibition is titled, *Resonance in Nature*, a brave show with the French brand allowing its merchandise to be reappropriated in Kuribayashi's intriguing diorama.

The artist's installation is undeniably very pretty, but it deserves a deeper curiosity. On one side, a mannequin fully garbed in the luxury label is surrounded by lush foliage. She is frozen in a languid pose, her leather-clad feet hanging above ground. Though ensconced in an idyllic space, the mannequin projects ennui.

A bolt of light emanates from this meticulously manicured space and passes through a window, leading the eye to another vignette which in contrast looks sparse and desolate.

There is a lone, barren tree with an elegant Hermès bag hanging from one of its limbs. The artist reveals what lies beneath the bleak terrain on which the tree stands. Dry, desperate roots seem to

float, unanchored on soil-less ground; amidst a jumble of rocks, two crystal goblets stand as delicate reminders of a decadent previous existence.

The imagery is both poetically beautiful and eerie, evoking feelings of pleasure as well as disturbing unease. It displays Kuribayashi's penchant for—and skill in—drawing his viewers to think deeper to see beyond what is apparent, or falsely portrayed.

Its location at Hermès' flagship store along Orchard Road makes *Resonance in Nature* all the more powerful. Some may prefer to look away and remain in the pleasant confines of manufactured perfection, just like Kuribayashi's stoic muse. But through his cheeky installation, the artist dares the privileged viewer to be more adventurous and explore brute realities, Hermès bag in hand. ■

Resonance in Nature runs up to March 2017, 3F, Hermès, Liat Towers, 541 Orchard Road, Singapore.



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LAP OF LUXURY

The Bentayga crosses new frontiers in more ways than one as Bentley's first SUV

The first rule when looking at the Bentayga is this: Don't let its appearance fool you.

Named after the imposing 4,642-foot mountain peak on Spain's Grand Canary Island, it measures an unapologetic 1.8 meters in height and 5.1 meters in length. This isn't your garden-variety SUV: it bears all the marks of a Bentley—from the large matrix grille and round LED lights to the signature sharp lines on advanced aluminum.

The Bentayga may be shaped like an SUV, but it's really a super car. The proof lies under the hood, in a twin-turbocharged 6.0 liter W12 engine. With 600bhp and 900Nm of torque on tap, the W12 can deliver 0-100kph in 4.1 seconds and even rise to a mind-boggling top speed of 301kph with its mighty 12 cylinders—all while hauling 2.4 tons of Bentley with a lot more ease than it has any right to.

The all-new chassis system impressively handles the weight while an active anti-roll system eliminates all the discomfort that comes with traversing bumpy terrain. If you were so inclined, you could even take it up and down a mountain, across sand dunes, over a river, and then some with little trouble.

Traveling in the Bentayga's opulent interiors means sitting back on quilted leather seats available in no less than 15 colors, and being surrounded by gleaming handcrafted wood panels and metalwork, plus a panoramic sunroof to boot.

Optional upgrades to this popular Bentley (201 E. Delos Santos Ave., Mandaluyong; 727-1919) include a six-program massager, a Naim audio system, entertainment for backseat passengers, a customized picnic set, and a Breitling Tourbillon clock. —PATRICIA CHONG



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JACS T. SAMPAYAN

THE EYE

ISSUE NO.
106

FASHION + STYLE + GROOMING



MEET ME AT THE USUAL

Cold and gloomy days are for secret
afternoon trysts and sharp casual jackets.
Whether carefully draped over the back of
a chair or strewn all over the room, each
piece describes a different kind of man



SEVERAL KNIT SWEATER, **THOM BROWNE** JACKET (ON BED) AND TROUSERS

CARL JAN CRUZ STRIPED SHIRT, RAJO LAUREL JACKET,
H&M X THE WEEKND JEANS





COMMES DES GARÇONS SHIRT JACKET WITH VISIBLE
STITCHING, CARL JAN CRUZ WHITE DISTRESSED
JEANS, STOCKTON ROW STEEL NECKLACE

SEE SHOPLIST (PAGE 106) FOR STORE INFORMATION



GUESS DENIM JACKET, **MELCHOR GUINTO** TROUSERS, **HELMUT LANG** NYLON JACKET

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREA BELDUA

STYLING BY RENEE CHRISTOPHER ULTADO

ART DIRECTION BY MARK SANTIAGO

GROOMING BY MARTIN ALONZO OF M.A.C COSMETICS

MODEL DANIEL KAKOULIDIS OF ELITE MANILA

SHOT ON LOCATION AT MANILA DIAMOND HOTEL,
QUINTOS STREET CORNER ROXAS BOULEVARD, MANILA,
528-3000

UNIQLO TURTLENECK **ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA** LINEN BUTTON DOWN SHIRT,
H&M STUDIO TROUSERS, **COMME DES GARÇONS** SHIRT (ON CHAIR)





HELL'S ANGELS

Marlon Brando intimidates with his mob of biker thugs as well as his leather jacket in the 1953 film *The Wild One*.

Very few articles of fashion are as unforgiving. There is no middle ground.

IN ONE'S OWN SKIN

In this tribute to the leather jacket, we present not so much "how to," but "what for:" the three points in a man's life when this classic accessory is a must

WORDS BY PAOLO ENRICO MELENDEZ

AH, THE LEATHER JACKET. The bit of clothing favored by artists as varied as Elton John and Lemmy Kilmister, Stevie Nicks and Judas Priest. Is there a men's accessory that is so desired, yet so feared? It's exactly like a sport coat, in that it elevates one's look from ordinary to commanding. Except it isn't, because how many times have you heard someone say, "A sport coat makes me look like a movie goon?"

Very few articles of fashion are as unforgiving. There is no middle ground. And when it comes to such a stance, there is no better match than one's teenage years: that time when importance and invincibility combine to make one believe he knows exactly what he wants. These years call for the sleek, black kind. Go pin some studs onto that thing. Stitch a Ramones back patch while you're at it. Attend a gig or 10. Be proud of the resulting smell.

But then one hits the young adult years, and one is not so sure anymore. Maybe you pick the bulky kind, with the buckles that go nowhere. Maybe it's in a shade of olive. Maybe it's faux, and who has time to condition those things? Watch it dry up like your interest in hobbies. Watch it disintegrate like so much kale chips, and as soon as you sit beside your boss at the office party to boot.

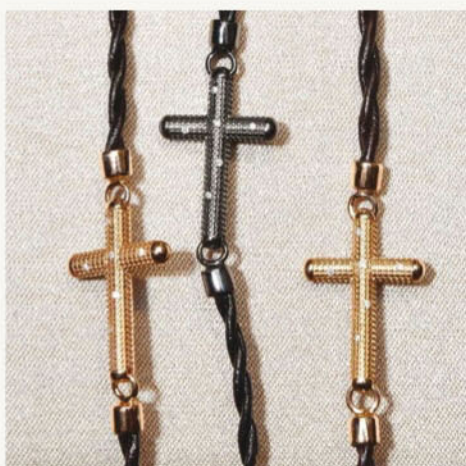
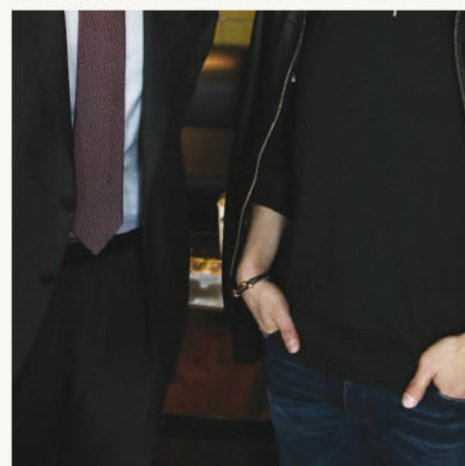
And you know what? That's okay. Because the next part is the best part. When one is of a certain age, time and perspective, combining to give him the sense that he, once again, knows exactly what he wants, youthful embarrassment left behind and rightfully so. These years call for a leather-and-chambray piece. In a handsome chocolate. Because when one's elbows need to be warm these days, by God, one is going to look cool doing it. ■



BAND TOGETHER

A former football champion partners with an Italian jewelry house to create elegant yet sporty pieces with a higher purpose in mind

WORDS BY JACS T. SAMPAYAN



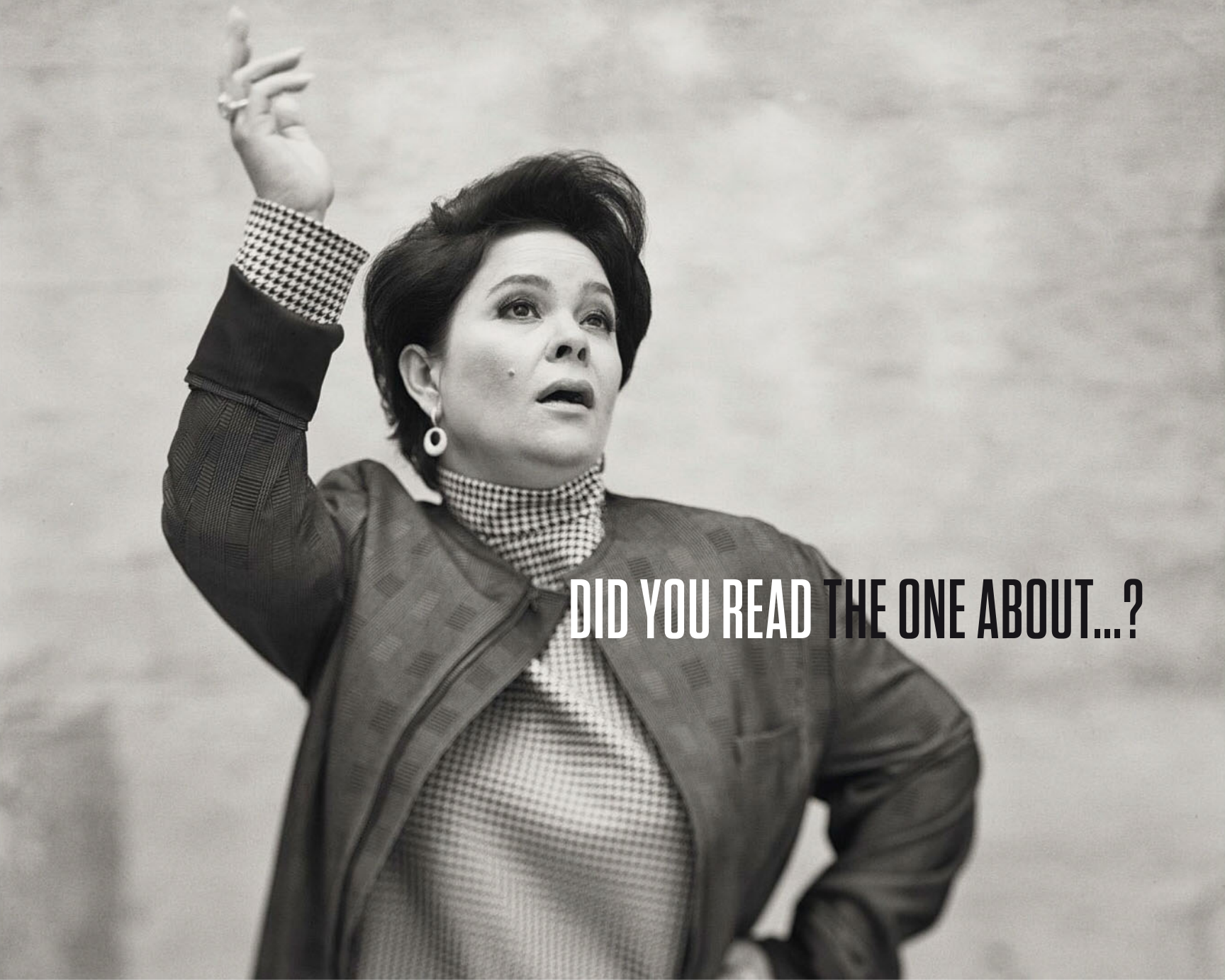
AFTER TAKING A TRIP north of Japan to visit the areas devastated by the magnitude 9.0 earthquake that rocked the country in March 2011, Italian jeweler Giorgio Damiani and former Japanese football star Hidetoshi Nakata looked for a way to help. “Both my family and Hidetoshi Nakata have embraced our desire to play an active part in supporting those who still live in extremely difficult conditions,” says Damiani, CEO of the brand founded by his grandfather in 1924. “We have always supported important charity projects. We are always attentive to planning events that will help to promote great causes.”

This led to Metropolitan Dream by H. Nakata, an elegantly athletic collection that consists of 21 pieces ranging from necklaces to bangles and bracelets in pink gold and black gold, both studded with diamonds. The jewelry line benefits Take Action, Nakata's foundation, as well as Home

For All, an initiative in Japan aiming to rebuild houses destroyed by calamity. “Many projects have been built and many more are expected to be built because of our partnership,” says Damiani. Metropolitan Dream also supports the jewelry brand's clean water efforts in Africa.

Damiani and Nakata (whose natty fashion sense has earned him the title “Asia's Answer to David Beckham”) designed the collection together. Made for the “Metropolitan Man,” its pieces use woven leather to accentuate its gems and metals. It is a line “with unmistakable texture, the result of skillful craft by our master goldsmiths,” Damiani says. ■

Metropolitan Dream by H. Nakata is available at Rustan's Makati, Courtyard Drive cor. Ayala Avenue, Ayala Center, Makati; 813-3739.



DID YOU READ THE ONE ABOUT...?

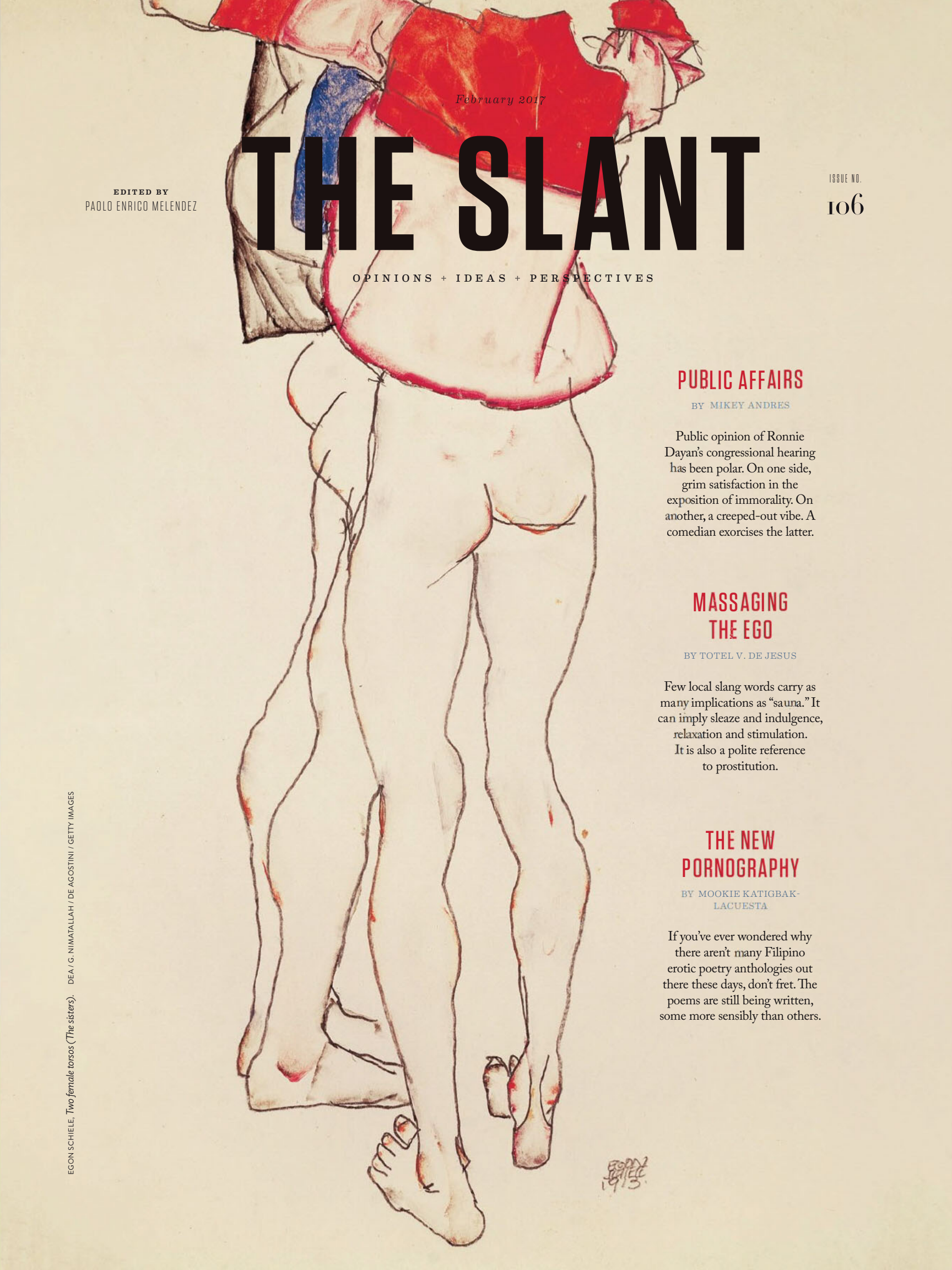
"TONYBOY ESCALANTE & THE PERILS OF PERFECTION"
BY KATRINA LAGMAN / PHOTO BY NEAL OSHIMA
(ROGUE, MARCH 2015)



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THE SLANT

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OPINIONS + IDEAS + PERSPECTIVES

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

BY MIKEY ANDRES

Public opinion of Ronnie Dayan's congressional hearing has been polar. On one side, grim satisfaction in the exposition of immorality. On another, a creeped-out vibe. A comedian exorcises the latter.

MASSAGING THE EGO

BY TOTEL V. DE JESUS

Few local slang words carry as many implications as "sauna." It can imply sleaze and indulgence, relaxation and stimulation. It is also a polite reference to prostitution.

THE NEW PORNOGRAPHY

BY MOOKIE KATIGBAK-LACUESTA

If you've ever wondered why there aren't many Filipino erotic poetry anthologies out there these days, don't fret. The poems are still being written, some more sensibly than others.

Public Affairs

A comedian revisits the congressional hearings of November 2016 to translate what was really being asked of Ronnie Dayan and his affair with Senator Leila de Lima

After failing to appear in an October hearing to shed light on his knowledge of the notorious drug trade at the New Bilibid Prison, Ronnie Dayan, driver-bodyguard, alleged bagman, and self-confessed lover of Senator Leila de Lima, was finally arrested in San Juan, La Union, last November 22, 2016.

Presented two days later before a house committee on justice, Dayan was the proverbial final piece of the puzzle, a key player who could provide insider information on a transaction that involved millions of pesos, dealings with convicted drug lords, and how de Lima, then Secretary of Justice, figured into all of this.

Instead, house representatives spent hours grilling Dayan about his “trade” with de Lima, wink wink. I’m talking about sex. They had sex. A lot of sex. Somehow this is important? Anyway.

Netizens were angered by this obvious display of misogyny, but what do they know? These questions were designed to “aid the imagination,” because that is somehow more important than aiding legislation—and really, who has time for that?

As a public service, I highlighted some of the more “in-depth” (get it? In-depth? Like sex? Double entendres are fun and easy!) questions let loose in the hearing to help our uninitiated masses better understand the inner workings of our noble statesmen in the august halls of the Senate (there’s a sex joke in there somewhere).

“Malakas na pagmamabalan ... Ganito na lang: 2007. Anong intensity ‘yun? 1, 2, 3, 4, 5?”

Comparing the “intensity” of their relationship to typhoon signals seems apt, what with wetness and all that. The representative also had choice questions regarding Dayan’s

I feel like this was a set-up for a sex joke. Perhaps the representative was hoping for phallic food, like hotdogs, or eggplants, maybe corn. Unfortunately for him, de Lima’s favorite food turns out to be *kare-kare*.

love for chili and de Lima’s favorite food. Somehow, these are pertinent to creating a link between de Lima/Dayan and drug lords. Of course, rating the “intensity” of a relationship on a scale of 1-5 is at par with boasting to your grade school friends about your “girlfriend,” but one can’t expect any more from an education committee member.

“Mabilig ka ba sa sili?”

I’m guessing this is an anal joke? Chili is hot going in and out, and that somehow parallels the aforementioned intensity. Or at least that’s what I hope it meant, because if it didn’t, then the representative really missed a good joke there.

“May paborito bang pagkain si de Lima?”

I feel like this was a set-up for a sex joke. Perhaps the representative was hoping for phallic food, like hotdogs, or eggplants, maybe corn. Unfortunately for him, de Lima’s favorite food turns out to be *kare-kare*. Not the sexiest food, but Dayan follows up with *adobong baboy*.

“Palakas nang palakas hanggang intensity 5. Kailan kayo nag-climax? Intensity 5, anong year?” Okay, so tasteless comments are not above our solons. But c’mon! Intensity 5? Climax? That comment was begging to be made. One must consider, though, how the representative views relationships, as being sex-centric enough to merit a few years of foreplay before a year of climax, followed by a lifetime of what I can only assume to be late nights on Quezon Avenue.

“Ang ibig mo bang sabihin na ang pagmamahal na ito ay maituturing na pag-ibig? Ang iyo bang pag-ibig kay Secretary de Lima ay wagas, dalisay, at matatag? Ibig mong sabihin na ayon sa iyong damdamin, ang pag-ibig na ito’y dalisay, wagas, at tapat?”

This representative, in contrast to his colleagues, takes a different approach: more than sex, the relationship between Dayan and



EGON SCHIELE, *Reclining Women*.

de Lima was based on love. And what poetic language he uses! It almost sounds straight out of a telenovela, only more melodramatic. The representative, of course, seems to believe that love conquers all, including an alleged multi-million-peso drug business. Naïve and juvenile as it may seem, this question actually sets up a pretty solid follow-up question:

"Kaya dahil sa pag-ibig na ito na dalisay, wagas, at tapat ay walang dahilan na siya'y ipagkanulo mo o magsabi ka ng hindi katotohanan?"

See how the representative set that two-part question up like a jab-straight combo? Brilliant. Of course, Dayan responds that, "For love of country and the law," he is willing to betray his lover. Exciting! It's almost as if the representative was more interested in Dayan's intention rather

than his sex life. Good on you, sir, you old-school romantic you.

"Ang ibig mo bang sabihin sa pagdinig na ito na ang iyong relasyon kay Secretary de Lima ay hindi lamang upang saluhan siya na magtampisaw sa pagmamahalan kung hindi siya ay saluhan din sa pagpawi ng init ng katarwan?"

I spoke too soon.

To preface this next line of questioning, one ought to mention that, prior to this hearing, this particular representative was involved with the Center for International Law, representing families of the victims of Maguindanao Massacre, among others, as well as the 70 members of the Malayang Lolas, a group of women who were raped and abused during World War II.

I mention this because it must explain his views on women, especially de Lima's claim that her relationship with Dayan was due to the "frailties of a woman." Surely, after years of dealing with victims of abuse, it justifies comments like:

"Sinabi niya na kayo ay nagka-relasyon dahil sa kanyang 'frailties of a woman.' Na'intindihan mo ba 'yung 'frailties of a woman'? 'Yung pagiging maselan bilang isang babae."

Those darn women and their weaknesses. How dare they become vulnerable and crave human affection? The representative, who has defended many victims of sexual and emotional torture, clearly views women as fragile and in need of a strong man to take care of them. It probably explains his indignation when he asks:

"Pinagsamantalahan mo ba itong si Leila de Lima nung nagkaroon kayo ng relasyon? Siya ba ay naging mukhang maselan noong kayo ay nagkaroon ng relasyon? Sa tingin mo ba pinagsamantalahan mo ang kabinaan ni Leila de Lima bilang isang babae noong kayo ay nagkaroon ng relasyon?"

It seems he can't fathom the idea of an adult woman consenting to an adult relationship with an adult man. And why would she, what with her frailties and all that. But of course, he doesn't completely blame de Lima, as he says to Dayan:

"Napakahilig mo naman magsalat."

Creepy? Yes. Pertinent? Uh, sure.

Again, these questions were all designed to ascertain the veracity of their relationship. Or was it about the drugs? I forget. There were plenty more choice comments from these lawmakers, but I couldn't revisit them without getting a huge case of heebie-jeebies. You could almost feel their labored breathing while reading these questions.

The noble statesmen of our House of Representatives, ladies and gentlemen. ■

Massaging the Ego

A veteran reporter goes back to his early years in an unlikely beat: as reluctant participant in the Filipino sauna culture

There were the three of us, drunk and wanting the warmth of a woman's touch. It was the late 1990s, and I was a young writer for a newspaper called *Today*. I was doing lifestyle and entertainment and it was unusual for me to be drinking with hardcore police beat photographers, much more those covering the night shift. I was supposed to be gay or at least effeminate, covering fashion shows and art exhibits, drinking Chardonnay and forking gruyere. But there I was in the neighborhood *carinderia* most nights, chugging San Miguel Pale Pilsen and munching pieces of two-day-old pork chops.

There was Rodel, a photographer with an Italian sounding surname, covering camps Crame and Aguinaldo and anything in between. The other was Bernard, an all-around lensman who could do Malacañang events or lifestyle product launches by day and the filth-and-gore of an EDSA mishap or a Roxas Boulevard breakwater salvaging by night.

The *carinderia* just behind *Today's* office had to close at midnight and we were so drunk, Rodel was flirting with Tita, the pretty 50-year-old Ilonggo widow tending the counter.

Going to a girly bar and losing our remaining cash to ladies drinks—that's beer with lots of ice—was not an option. We wanted action. We wanted the main thing.

"*Sauna tayo. Sama kayo sa 'kin!*" said Bernard. It was past midnight and since the *Today* office building was along EDSA in Guadalupe, it was easy to hail a cab.

In less than 30 minutes, we were at a crowded portion of Taft Avenue that went straight to Pasay Rotonda, where vendors had made both sides of the streets their permanent homes.

There were groups of drunks walking around, and bums on drugs arguing. There were a few pedicab drivers on the streets still waiting for fare. Jeepneys with sleepy passengers inched past, toward the deepest portion of Baclaran, careful not to sideswipe a fruit vendor's cart or a parked pedicab.

The taxi driver didn't want to go further into the crowded area, which decades later Dan Brown would immortalize in his novels when he described this side of the metro as the "Gates of Hell."

We walked the rest of the way, and for a while I was nervous, despite the alcohol. Bernard led us to a street corner with videoke beer joints and cart-driven *lugawan* stalls.

And there, hidden behind a row of fruit vendors, was Rashomon Sauna and Health Club. From the outside, it looked like an abandoned building. In my inebriated state, I imagined ladies in kimono with tea, and a Jacuzzi.

There was a wooden stair leading to the second floor and the reception area. A young, thin man with a big stomach was sleeping there.

"Sir, *may mga kilalang masahista na po ba kayo dito? Anong room numbers po?*" he said, while

freshman, or was it in fourth year high school? He used to tease me about my virginity.

For a time, I knew some friends and cousins thought I was gay. I had shoulder-length hair because I adored Eddie Vedder and many thought the name Pearl Jam was so effeminate compared with Soundgarden or Stone Temple Pilots. The name Totel is actually so feminine, some invites I received from PR people read "Totelle."

But looking back, my fear of the sauna started in my fourth year in college. I was sharing a room with five other male students in a men's dormitory in the belly of the University Belt in Sampaloc, Manila.

During long weekends or the usual holidays, my dorm mates, whose hometowns were in the farthest island-provinces of Mindanao and the Visayas, stayed behind. One time, they kept on talking about a sauna bath on Avenida Rizal.

By midnight, they were wearing their Sunday best, smelled of Jovan musk (the fake ones bought in Binondo), and about to spend their savings for a *biyak*.

Loosely translated, it means "cut through" or "penetrate." That's how they called it. "*Tara, bibiyak kami.*" I never joined them, afraid I might get infected, or the place would be raided by the cops; my parents would have sent me back to the province.

They talked in particular about a certain room number that was a must-try, because the masseuse looked like the younger version of Anna Marie Gutierrez. No reference to *Scorpio Nights*, though they had seen the film in Betamax.

I learned later that all the boys in the dorm had made that Avenida Rizal trip, aside from me and my cousin Noel, who was a member of the Opus Dei. Even our gay roommate, a dentistry student whose name escapes me now. I remember he had a crush on Noel, but had participated in *biyakan* due to peer pressure. He was still the same happy gay guy the morning after. He was more accepted by the group than my cousin and I were. We were outcasts.

It was the early 1990s, and Mount Pinatubo had just erupted, spewing ash as far as Morayta Avenue. The joke at the dorm was, "*Mabuti*

And then she asked me, "Do you feel all right?"

And I said, like in the Eric Clapton song,

"Yes, I feel wonderful . . . tonight."

scratching his beer belly and stretching his other arm.

Bernard talked to him. He gave us keys to our designated rooms. Those days, if memory serves me right, it was only around P240 for a room with an electric fan. If it was an air-conditioned room with a bathroom, it was around P300. I can't even remember the room number given to me.

We were led to a dimly lit area with rooms facing each other. It was the setting in Wong Kar-Wai's *In The Mood For Love*. As a first-timer in this joint, I was immensely in the mood for lust. Still, I was deliriously nervous.

I wasn't a virgin anymore but, admittedly, I was a late bloomer in that department. I lost mine after graduating from college, with my girlfriend who was still an undergraduate. My younger brother lost his when he was a



EGON SCHIELE, *Seminude Female Figure*.

pa ang Pinatubo, nakapagpaputok. Eh yung iba dyan."

Going to a sauna, I realized back then, was an undeclared initiation to the group.

So there I was in Rashomon, hoping for *biyakan*, if many years late. I was ushered by the boy attendant into a room adjacent to Rodel's. Bernard was at the farthest end of the hallway, which I later learned was the special room serviced by two masseuse.

My room was about four meters wide, with a bed, a towel, and a dry, small, thin piece of soap that I suspected was already used.

Despite the cold, I took a shower. Surprisingly, there was hot water. Tension still gripped me. There was something about not knowing what was going to happen. A police raid again crossed my mind. That was how it went in the *Bagets* movie.

But I reminded myself that I didn't have to fear a raid, with two police beat photographers with me. If memory serves me right, they still had their camera bags with them. It was easy to

reason out that we were doing an investigative story on saunas.

Bernard and Rodel were the type of photographers who would spend the night in police precincts for a scoop. They had access to beer joints. They knew which sergeant or lieutenant co-owned this and that girly bar. They were creatures of the night, and I was a lifestyle guy who just a few hours ago had covered the Philippine launch of Clinique for Men. I actually sprayed some on me because they gave sample perfumes in the loot bags.

Refreshed and back on the bed, I waited. In supine position, I chose to keep my underwear on, and have the towel covering my back. I was close to falling asleep when I heard a knock on the door.

There she was, carrying a small plastic box with oils, powder, and lotion. My masseuse scantily dressed in what looked like a short white skirt and tight white upper garment.

I don't remember her name, if those in her line of work ever give their real names at all. She

was thin, petite, and surprisingly bubbly. She was probably in her late 20s. In the dim light, she was neither ugly nor pretty. Just the girl in class you don't pay much attention to. She smelled of Johnson's Baby Powder, Sunsilk, and Safeguard. These are not product placements, but the combination of those smells would always remind me of my first Sauna experience.

I complimented her on her freshness. She said she took a bath before going to the room, which probably explained my long wait. It was okay because in those days, sauna guests could stay for hours. Unlike now, with a one-hour limit. Or so I heard.

Suddenly the room was filled with her simple, natural scent. "Hello, sorry *na-late ako*. *Anong gusto mo?*"

I couldn't think nor answer straight. "Amm, *anong pwede? Magkano?*"

She laughed, and pointed to her box of oil and lotion. "Powder?" I said.

She removed the towel on my back and poured powder. The warm strokes of her hands were calming. I had never had a massage like that in my life, and it was just what I was looking for.

"*Ang bango mo naman. Amoy sampaguita ka*," she said. And I realized the smell of Clinique lingered despite the alcohol and quick shower.

"*Sino mga kasama mo? Tatay mo at uncle?*" she said. I said yes, laughing at the knowledge that my two companions were only a few years older than me.

"*Marami akong customer na ganyan. Mag-ama or mag-tiyo. Pinabibinyagan yung mga teenagers*," she volunteers the information. "*Minsan nga pareho ko pa naging customer yung mag-tatay. Siyempre, magkaibang araw.*"

Pinoy macho culture, I thought, but I just laughed at her tale. I remembered a sexagenarian senior editor—let's call him Sir Abe—who once told me: "*Hindi ka astig 'pag hindi ka nagso-sauna.*" I thought he was referring to a coverage of the violent dispersal of rallyists during the annual SONA (State of the Nation Address) outside the Batasan.

Astig also meant getting away with it. Sir Abe recounted how a colleague in the police beat was caught in a raid at the legendary but now-closed Maalikaya Health Complex in Quezon City. "He showed his media ID and they let him go," said Sir Abe. Those days, macho alcoholics were so common among members of the Fourth State.

The masseuse returned the towel and began working on my thighs, then my legs and feet. Afterward, she worked her way back up with soft, slow, gentle rub and strokes.

When it was time to massage my neck and head, she climbed giggling on top of the bed

and sat on my butt. Her fingers started doing gentler strokes on my head. That was the clincher. I dozed off for a while. I thought it was eternity. She woke me up and made me turn around for the second part of the massage.

She sat on the side of the bed and poured oil on me this time, as I had requested. She started making those slow, rolling strokes on my chest. It was meant to excite, rather than relax. I cowered as her hands brushed my nipples. She giggled and thought it was so girlish of me to have done that.

And then she asked me, “Do you feel all right?”

And I said, like in the Eric Clapton song, “Yes, I feel wonderful... tonight.”

When she covered my, er, breasts, with the towel and started massaging my thighs, there was something different about her strokes.

Just as she stood up to turn off the lights, there came an incessant knocking on the door. It was dead drunk Rodel. There was a commotion. I thought it was a raid.

It turned out that Rodel had a fight with his masseuse. In his drunkenness, he forgot to take a shower, and wanted the masseuse to go down on him. The masseuse refused, and later slapped him when he insisted. It was much later after leaving Rashomon that we realized that half of Rodel's face had turned reddish black.

“*Hindi mo sinabi, gusto mo lang pala ng mabilisang deep-tissue massage sa mukha,*” Bernard told Rodel, breaking the ice. Rodel cursed as we headed home.

I learned months later Rashomon was torn down because the whole block was bought by a group of Filipino-Chinese businessmen. A mall now occupies the area but the street vendors and the snail's pace traffic remain. The Gates of Hell would be in the news as the site of nightly killings of pedicab drivers and bums.

When *Today* was sold to another news organization in a merger, we lost all our jobs. We parted ways and worked for other, more established newspapers. We all had families of our own.

Nowadays, sauna has become an obsolete term. There are still a lot of Rashomons, but these now go by the generic name “health spa.”

Times have changed and I think even Bernard and Rodel would rather spend their extra money on a new pair of soccer shoes for their eldest or diapers for their youngest or a new dress for their haggard housewife, even a trip to the barber for the shaggy dog. These days, that is macho and super *astig* for us. If lives depend on you, the most relaxing thing is arriving home safe and sane before sunrise to feel the warm embrace of loved ones.

However, I have yet to work out if Clinique for Men really smells like sampaguita. ■

The New Pornography

Filipino writers are still writing about sex—it's the milieu that has changed. A poet explains

In 1992, a collection of erotic literature written by Filipino women writers, aptly titled *Forbidden Fruit*, made its way to university bookstores, and a couple of major outlets. Small audiences rifled past its pages searching for the newest metaphor for the oldest urge. The writing was called bold and new, though there was nothing bold and new about erotic writing written by women. What, perhaps, was bold and new was that Filipino women writers, hot on the heels of feminism, were declaring an equal right to write about sex. In the 90s and in the Philippines, this was the bravest literary taboo. It was a dare to inhabit a country where the president and stakeholders were men.

Forbidden Fruit takes its name from the greatest biblical folly: the pursuit of knowledge at the expense of blissful ignorance. By virtue of its title, the book makes the assertion that erotic knowledge began not with men, but with women. It was female territory, as Genesis asserts, and as history denies. Sex specialist Dr. Margie Holmes wrote the foreword. Leading writers like Marjorie Evasco and Benilda Santos wrote about the blushing act assertively, candidly, and yes, sometimes even like men.

Then as now, women writers writing the erotic were a small minority. Furthermore, they belonged to a small literary minority known as the Filipino Writer. That they were the minority of a minority lent special attention to their cause. Who, after all, doesn't love an underdog?

For a kid such as myself in the 90s, and one only getting acquainted with the political underpinnings of erotic writing by women, the book inspired swooning admiration, and a feeling of solidarity. Suddenly, it was all right to be a woman and to have erotic feelings; and suddenly, erotic writing was as much about the mind as it was about the body. Take, for example, “Ang Sabi Ko Sa Iyo,” a poem by Benilda Santos. In the beginning lines, a star apple is cut open with a knife. Sap springs forth, and drops form on the cutting edge. The writer turns the images into

the stuff of metaphysics: it isn't the flesh that enthralls her, it's the knife; it's not the cut fruit, but the sharp blade. Such a strange fruit. So many permutations of meaning. Such a sticking, sticky metaphor.

In my mind, and perhaps in the minds of so many in college classrooms around the country, this

These are not imaginative times. Ours is not so much an erotic age as it is a pornographic one.



poem remains the ultimate erotic poem written by a woman in local literature. It is spare as a haiku and deftly imagistic in its approach. Like the imagists, the author here is the perfect architect of meaning. A metaphor comes with a base of ideas—who can ignore, for example, the way a knife is used as a phallic symbol? Here, the figurative kisses the literal, and a “lightning in the mind” (to borrow from Allen Ginsberg) connects the two. In the poem, the way to the body is through the mind and this is as good an erotic transaction as any.

It seems pertinent to ask if such writing can exist in this day and age. Is there a need for the erotic poem in our country during these times? Should there be a *Forbidden Fruit 2*? If erotic writing is an act of the imagination, then the answer is yes. These are not imaginative times. Ours is not so much an erotic age as it is a pornographic one. Social media has made it so that there is no room left to the imagination. On any given day, sex and carnage flood our screens, and with them goes a blizzard of erotic depictions. This is par for the course, belonging as we do to the digital, post-truth age: an age where things are depicted, often sensationally, to elicit a strong emotional response. A new pornography, so to speak, though with less hedonism, and far less pleasure.

Of course, local erotic literature is still being written with the same intelligence and thoughtfulness as it was in 1992. You won't find the writing segregated, however: erotic writing



EGON SCHIELE, *Standing nude with spread legs and yellow-brown shawl*.

by men and women are now anthologized in the same books. In this respect, *Forbidden Fruit* must have achieved its objective: women writers writing the erotic no longer occupy rarefied space like the Filipiniana section in bookstores. Writing about sex as a woman is no longer a brave act unless it is attached to larger political and social realities (e.g., rape or the degradation of women through various cultural practices). But you won't find these anthologies lining the shelves of major bookstores. What you will find lining the shelves of major bookstores is the work of Michael Faudet.

On a trip to Fully Booked yesterday, I was appalled to find an entire shelf devoted to his poetry. Spread out over three full rows of shelf space were two of his titles: *Dirty Pretty Things* and *Bitter Sweet Love*. Faudet has been written up as an international bestseller, one whose "whimsical and erotic writing has captured the hearts and minds of literally thousands of readers from around the world." Further, he "paints vivid pictures with intricate words and explores compelling themes of love, loss, relationships, and sex." "Who is this Michael Faudet?" I asked myself. A turn of the page answered my question. He is the author of poems like "She Said," an interesting counterpoint to Santos' "Ang Sabi Ko Sa Iyo." Below is Faudet's full text:

"Romance is well and good, but...it's just that I am not in the mood for whispered sweet nothings or your fingers running softly through my hair. What I want, more than anything, is for you to treat me like your own personal sex doll. "Don't kiss me—make me bite my lip."

For a bestselling author with hundreds of thousands of fans on social media, Faudet's success doesn't bode well for the future of erotic poetry, but it does prove that there is still a market for it. That Faudet seems to be so successful might even be good for the genre in that people want to read his work; if his work is "poetry," then people want to read "poetry." Even if his poetry achieves the banality of pornography, and even if it is overripe erotically. So overripe, you want to leave it out to rot, and so overripe, there's no thrill in reading it.

The question doesn't really seem to be whether or not erotic poetry is still being written and read. Rather, the question that begs to be asked is what is the next secret thrill; what is the new forbidden fruit? ■

T R O U B L E W I L L F I N D

It doesn't take much to piss off a nation. Just ask Agot Isidro. With one online post, she went from beloved celebrity to queen of controversy. **Claire Jiao** meets the actress and examines the fallout
Photographs by Shaira Luna

M E





t was October 2016.

President Rodrigo Duterte has just dared the United States and the European Union to cut all foreign aid from the Philippines. Their officials had called on the Philippine government to investigate allegations of human rights abuses in Duterte's war on drugs.

Just a few weeks before, Duterte cursed at US President Barack Obama for the same reason, losing a rare one-on-one meeting with him at a gathering hosted by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Laos as a result. He also flipped his middle finger at the EU on live television, and threatened to pull the Philippines out of the United Nations.

It has been a colorful first few months for the new Philippine President, to say the least. "Go away, bring your money to somewhere else," Duterte told the US and the EU in his latest tirade. "...We will not beg for it."

All around, the political mood was sour and churlish. Tensions ran high on social media. People fought, and bitterly so.

They fought about Duterte, his foul mouth and his pristine intentions. They fought about the death toll. Was it 2,000 or 3,000 dead? Did it matter? Were they even happening at all? And they fought each other, branding one another "Dutertards" and "Yellowtards" depending on where they stood with every news story—real, fake, or biased—that was published.

Agot Isidro was livid at the current events. She took to Facebook after the President's speech and typed out a post.

While she didn't name Duterte directly, it was clear the status referred to him. She blasted him for picking fights with other world leaders. The Philippines, a Third World country, relied on foreign assistance.

"[A]yaw naming magutom... Hindi na nga nakakain ang nakararami, gugutumin mo pa lalo," she wrote.

The post was strongly worded until the end. "*Hindi ka bipolar. You are a psychopath.*"

Before this, Isidro says she barely posted on Facebook. "But," she recalls now, "I was just so frustrated."

The post was originally open to her limited group of friends. But this time, the issue was pressing. She decided to make her post public.

Little did she know, she was throwing a lit match into a powder keg.

It took a few days for the post to blow up but once it did, the impact came wave upon wave.

Isidro was flooded with messages from family, friends, and colleagues. Her Facebook page was getting endless notifications with every share, comment, and reaction to her post.

It continued well after that. It spawned memes, videos, even public statements from top politicians and the Palace itself.

As of this writing, the post has about 6,500 comments and more than 51,000 likes (a close race between the angry face and the heart, if you care to know, with 4,400 and 4,300, respectively). And it's been shared a whopping 12,300 times.

It suddenly became a battleground for a debate much larger than the post itself. Some used Isidro as the poster girl for the opposition, many more used her as a straw man to tear down criticism against the Duterte administration.

Amid the firestorm, Isidro briefly considered to end the controversy and shut it all down.

"But then I thought, why should I? You make a stand, *tapos maduduwag ka. Panindigan mo 'yan*," she says.

It's not her first rodeo. In 2011, she was one of the celebrities who called out Willie Revillame for forcing a six-year-old boy to perform a sexy dance on his game show in exchange for a cash prize. She voiced her opposition on Twitter then and faced similar backlash.

"I've heard it all before. I've been called many names," she shrugs. "But definitely, it's gotten worse today."

She stands by what she said, and she's kept the post to prove it. But is that enough to take out the sting from some of the comments she's gotten?

Isidro admits there are low blows—she doesn't delete the comments so people can see just how nasty some of them are. But she shrugs them all off, regardless.

"I'm very self-aware. I don't doubt myself. I don't let comments make me doubt myself," she says.

I ask her if it's really that simple. Social media has become so distressing, it's become a running joke how many friendships politics has destroyed during the election year.

Isidro says she doesn't immerse herself too deeply into social media to begin with. She has a grand total of 400 friends, and her target is to pare that down to 100 people she has real, meaningful relationships with.

"I don't bother with how many friends I have or how many likes I get," she says. "So what does it matter what online strangers have to tell me?"

It's an interesting thought. If a word war rages on online but you don't plug in, does it really make a sound?

Isidro was starring in a musical during the weeks of the controversy, and the PETA Theater had to call in extra security for her. Bodyguards kept close to her during meet-and-greets in case anyone in the audience tried anything. After a while, though, Isidro sent her security away.

"No one's given me any trouble," she says. "It's all online."

Once in a while, strangers will even come up to her to thank her for speaking up, offer their support amid the controversy. "It still happens now. I can be in the grocery, and someone will stop me to say, 'I'm with you.'"

So much of Filipino culture has moved online, with our penchant for—or addiction to—mobile phones and social networking sites. Even political discourse has migrated there too. The masterstroke of the Duterte campaign was to build a strong base of supporters online, effectively overcoming its disadvantage in spending power and machinery on the ground.

But the online battle is just one of many battles to be waged, as Isidro's example shows.

What happens in the surrounds of our Facebook and Twitter communities can feel close and personal because these are our friends and friends of friends.

But in the real world, it's not the handful of people you know that will matter when the issues are decided. It's the greater part of 100 million people that will.

**"I DON'T BOTHER
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I GET," SHE SAYS.
"SO WHAT DOES
IT MATTER WHAT
ONLINE STRANGERS
HAVE TO TELL ME?"**

Styled by Pam Quiñones
Makeup by Juan Sarte
Hair by Mark Familara of Jed Root
Stylist assisted by Blake Samson
Digital imaging by Grace Sioson

Social networking sites have rightly been called echo chambers, as people can opt to unfriend and unfollow those they disagree with. This works both ways. We can be convinced the voices we hear are louder than they actually are, and we can be fooled into thinking the voices we don't hear aren't actually there.

It doesn't feel right to bring up some of the abuse hurled at Isidro when her Facebook post went viral. Raising them as questions somehow dignifies them as valid points.

But Isidro addresses the issue herself. She lists some of the worst comments she's read. "*Baog, iniwan ng asawa, may boyfriend na drug lord...* They really made it personal."

It's easy to be hurtful when you're anonymous online, she offers as an explanation. But it's not

just trolls that have used that kind of misogynistic language against her.

When Revillame was forced to take his show off the air after child abuse allegations, he went on a 24-minute monologue during his last episode, naming his critics one by one and retaliating. His choice words for Isidro?

"Wala ka namang anak eh, bakit mo ako gaganyanin? Alamin mo muna."

Obviously, Revillame is not the paragon of stellar, gender-sensitive behavior to begin with. But it's still a significant logical leap, even for him, to link Isidro's lack of children to his own treatment of a child onstage.

Isidro confronts the labels head-on. "Yes, I don't have children. What does that mean? Does that make me any less of a woman?"

She doesn't shy away from discussing her separation from her husband either. She even jokes, "*May boyfriend akong drug lord? Hindi na nga kapanipaniwala na may boyfriend ako, eh drug lord pa kaya.*"

Yes, these insults are the lowest of the low and probably—hopefully—don't reflect the values of broader society. But why is it that the baseline for male personalities never reaches such depths? I can't think of a male celebrity who's been asked to defend his masculinity or virility just to get the public's approval to speak his mind.

Funnily enough, Duterte himself has had an annulled marriage and Revillame, two. No one raises an eyebrow. No one considers it their personal failures.

Detractors also took issue with Isidro's being a celebrity.

People like her have no business meddling in politics, she was told. These are matters of consequence. Put your head down and just focus on showbiz.

"It's unfair that people belittle celebrities," Isidro says.

"Sabi nila, 'Ano na ba nagarwa mo?' Madami. Nagbabayad naman ako ng burwis. Inaalirw ko naman kayo. Dabil ba artista kami, hindi na kami purwede magka-opinyon?"

In fact, Isidro says, it's precisely because she's an artist that she has such strong opinions about political issues. "More than any other profession, I guess, we rely on empathy, on our feelings. It's our tool."

Isidro hasn't experienced the drug war firsthand, but she can imagine how it feels to be a spouse left behind, a child orphaned, or a neighbor terrorized. She can't find any justification for killings.

It's strikingly similar to what Meryl Streep said during her seminal Golden Globes speech this January. She enjoined her fellow actors to condemn the disrespect and violence taking root in American society, reminding them of "the privilege and the responsibility of the act of empathy."

Acting is essentially tapping into the stories and struggles of other characters and living them as if they were your own, representing them to a greater audience so that other people can share the experience as well.



A woman with long, wavy brown hair is sitting on a dark wooden floor. She is wearing a light-colored, possibly beige or light brown, draped dress with thin straps. She is also wearing long, ribbed socks in a matching color. She is leaning her right arm on the back of a white sofa. Her left hand is resting on the floor. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The lighting is warm and soft, creating a moody atmosphere. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**"MORE THAN
ANY OTHER
PROFESSION, I
GUESS, WE RELY
ON EMPATHY, ON
OUR FEELINGS.
IT'S OUR TOOL."**



"I DIDN'T HAVE A POLITICAL AGENDA. I WASN'T TRYING TO SWAY ANYONE. I SAID MY PIECE AND EVERYONE IS FREE TO SAY THEIRS."



OPPOSITE: BEETROOT BRALETTE. THIS PAGE: MUUNO SWIMWEAR. HELMUT LANG CARDIGAN. NEXT SPREAD: BEETROOT BRALETTE. MATICEVSKI SKIRT.

With more time to observe the president now, and with the benefit of hindsight to see the fallout of her actions, I ask Isidro if there's anything she would have done differently.

She becomes pensive for a moment. "I probably shouldn't have called him names."

But everything else? Absolutely no regrets.

"I didn't have a political agenda. I wasn't trying to sway anyone. I said my piece, and everyone is free to say theirs," she says.

What she doesn't understand is why the government and its supporters seem so sensitive to criticism.

In every issue, they are quick to draw battle lines. Anyone falling outside their camp must be a member of the opposition.

"I'm not a supporter of the Liberal Party," Isidro says.

"I feel just as strongly about the Mamasapano Massacre as I do the war on drugs. I dislike

[former President Benigno S. Aquino III] for protecting his secretaries the same way I dislike Duterte for making enemies abroad."

Isidro reveals that some anti-Duterte groups even tried to recruit her after her post, but she turned them down.

She doesn't identify as anti-Duterte. She considers him the rightful president and rejects any ouster talk. "*Mas magulo lang 'yun*," she says.

She also credits him for making government processes move faster—his tough talk on corruption is producing immediate results.

The temptation to use the divide-and-conquer strategy is understandable. Duterte enjoys a wide base of support; if people are forced to choose between camps, well, the numbers are on the president's side.

But this is no longer the campaign, where victories can be tallied, and the winner takes all. This isn't the wild, wild west of social media either, where sheer volume can send you straight

to the top of the news feed.

People feel differently from one issue to the next, and they will change their mind depending on the timing or the trade-off, and they will likely change their mind again for no reason at all. Democracy is complex and messy—an "us" and a "them" don't capture all sides of an issue, and the six new emoji buttons on your Facebook tray don't quite reflect that diversity either.

"Isn't it in the best interest of the Duterte administration to just hear what everyone else has to say? At least they get to know what everyone thinks of their work," Isidro asks.

It's funny, she muses. Her detractors will go to great lengths to disprove her opinion, even go as far as to use her femininity and her celebrity to discredit her right to say it.

"But with everything that's happening today, you know what I think the most dangerous thing is?" Isidro asks, and then smiles.

"People who don't have an opinion." ■







THE LONG SHADOW OF **RUDY FARÍÑAS**



Few political figures approach the level of influence held by Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas. **Paolo Enrico Meléndez** sits down with the representative from Ilocos Norte to talk political philosophy, personal grief, and malleable alliances
Photographs by JL Javier

"BALIMBING?"

He says it himself, the word, the theme that one might tiptoe around in an interview. It is a move that disarms you, makes you see things the way he does, sways your opinion from belligerent to more amenable. It is thus a move that sums up Rodolfo "Rudy" Fariñas, power broker, family man, and consummate political survivor.

It's been a good part of an hour, this interview on the early days of the 2016 holiday break. Traffic outside is sparse, the air not quite the crisp benediction we city people look forward to at this time of the year. Earlier that morning, I sat in this condominium's receiving area wondering who would meet me. When the congressman from Ilocos Norte came by himself, I was almost at a loss for words. That he knew exactly who I was—and there were about a dozen of us waiting in the lobby—further hinted at a media savvy that would become more obvious the longer we talked.

The man has the PR moves. He knows which of the building staff are his province-mates. He calls me "Boss." He waves at my phone in assent before I can even ask permission to record our conversation. And, later in the day, as we wrap up the interview and shoot, he apologizes that our planned coffee break has fallen through—a plan I myself had forgotten as soon as it was broached.

He's on break, as are the rest of the members of the House of Representatives. He says he likes his shorts and loafers. But he is formal, almost cold, when he starts talking about his early years, attending elementary to high school in Laoag City, where his family runs a transport company. He tells me he then moved to Manila, to take his bachelor of Arts, and later bachelor of Law, in Ateneo de Manila. "Public record *naman na matagal ako sa law school. Hindi ko naseryoso. Kalakasan sa chicks*," he chuckles. His law school shenanigans, particularly with then girlfriend, actress Vivian Velez, are well-known. "At *nag-martial law*. It took me seven years to finish my law proper."

In 1978, he took the bar exam, and landed 8th in the ranking. But the young Fariñas was not quite done being carefree. "*Hindi ako nagmamadaling mag-abogado*," he tells me. He spent the next six months in the States.

Back in Ilocos Norte after the extended vacation, Fariñas practiced law for some three months, before entreaties to run for the mayoral position became too pressing to ignore. Then President Ferdinand Marcos was the only previous bar topnotcher from Ilocos at the time, so as far as Fariñas's supporters were concerned, running for office was the logical next step.

Rodolfo "Rudy" Fariñas

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- 1978** Passes the bar. He is ranked 8th in the batch
- 1980** Wins the mayoral position in Laoag. He serves for one term
- 1986** Wins the Ilocos Norte gubernatorial seat, which he holds for 10 years
- 1998** Serves as representative of Ilocos Norte's 1st District
- 2010** Returns to congress, again as Ilocos Norte, 1st District Representative

OTHER NOTABLE POSITIONS HELD

Chair, Regional Peace and Order Council
Chair, Regional Development
Vice chair, House Committee on Justice
Chair, House Committee on Rules
Majority Leader

A black and white profile photograph of a middle-aged man with dark hair, looking upwards and to the right. He is wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored, patterned collared shirt. The background is a bright, cloudy sky.

**"Public record
naman na matagal
ako sa law school.
Hindi ko naseryoso.
Kalakasan sa chicks,"**
he chuckles. His law
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me seven years to
finish my law proper."**

“Kantiyaw, kantiyaw. So tumakbo akong mayor noong 1980.” He was 28 years old; he still holds the record for being the youngest elected city mayor in the country.

I ask him which tangible change from his time as a local official inspires him most, whenever he visits his province, and he seems unsure where to start, his eyes focusing on the middle distance. *“Mahaba na kasi ang career ko eh,”* he finally says, more to himself than to me. *“Well, ako ang nagpauso sa amin ng bringing the government closer to the people. Binata ako, so I was mobile.”*

There were 80 *barangays* under Fariñas’s watch. He would visit the communities, at times spending the night with the people. *“Kung ano ang kailangan nila, kailangan ko rin ibigay,”* he continues. Top among these needs was infrastructure. *“Kailangan namin ng bypass road, para hindi ka na dadaan sa city proper ng Laoag.”* The project cost P3 billion, unadjusted for inflation, a remarkable sum for a provincial project at the time. It was an early hint at how well Fariñas would play politics throughout his career.

He also began a citywide discipline and order campaign. Riding on the success of these projects, Fariñas later went on to win the gubernatorial elections. He held the post for a decade.

“I feel na iyong inumpisahan ko noong mayor ako, ganoon pa rin noong governor ako. I met with the people regularly. Kung ano yung aspirations nila, nade-deliver ko.” He credits his success to the Ilocano character. *“Ilocanos are self-sufficient. Survivors ang mga Ilocanos. Yung pangangailangan, andoon din siguro, pero hindi desperate. Labat may sariling backyard, may maliit na farm kabiti papaano. So ang kailangan nila was mostly basic. Barangay Hall. Farm to market road. Tulong sa irrigation. Farm inputs. Certified seeds.”* To increase the contact point between constituency and bureaucracy, he required all local government heads to go with him on his consultative visits. *“Kaya naging responsive labat,”* he says.

I make a note that that is always a good thing, regional character and responsive local governance meeting halfway to mutually protect and develop both private and public space. And it is at this point that Fariñas warms up. He starts referring to himself in the first person, as an individual, rather than in the third person, as an office. His replies become elaborate and candid. He is no longer indulging media—*“Kung hindi lang ako nahihiya sa inyo”* was his half-serious admonishment to me just before beginning the interview— but discussing governance. We are in his territory now.

“Oo!” he replies to my observation, the sudden enthusiasm in his voice once again catching me off guard. *“In fact, maraming naiinggit sa amin noon. Ang linis ng probinsiya ninyo, ah.”* And I was honest with them. I told

them *na malinis talaga kami*. We clean our own backyards. *Kaunting leadership lang ang kailangan*, to make it a community effort. So like you said, halfway *na lang*.”

And the key to this? I ask.

“Access!” he says, now fully animated. *“Noong mayor ako, capital province of the President at the time ang Ilocos, at kapag ako ang bumingi sa government agencies, rightly or wrongly akala nila malapit ako sa presidente. Kaya marami akong na-convince to extend help to my constituencies.”*

As proof positive of this approach, Fariñas cites his work surfacing the insurgents of Ilocos during the 80s. The province had been heavily militarized during the Marcos years, with Elizabeth Marcos governing

from 1967 to 1982, and Ferdinand Marcos Jr. following right after. *“May mga nasasaktan. Naaaresto. Ganoon ang problema noong pumasok ako.”* People in the countryside took to the hills, Fariñas says, followed by this carefully worded context: *“They didn’t feel their leader’s presence.”*

With the Marcoses overthrown in 1986, the insurgency rushed in to fill the vacuum. Kidnappings were a real threat, and so local leaders were wary of going to the countryside. Towns were raided, to as close a proximity to the provincial capital as San Nicolas, which is a mere three kilometers away from Laoag City.

When Fariñas assumed the governorship, there was one army brigade in the province—three battalions, or around 1,500 to 2,600 men. But the new governor preferred to take

the front line. *“Stay in camp,”* I told the soldiers,” Fariñas says. To him, the rationale was simple. *“Hindi nila kilala ang tao. Takot sila. Takot ang tao sa kanila.”* This was the root of violence.

The local insurgency didn’t take kindly to the response. Two Fariñas-owned buses were burned in a span of three months. *“Kung matakot ako, magtutuloy-tuloy. So lumabas ako,”* Fariñas says. He responded with a public speech threatening to go tit for tat. The insurgents were more than game, however—in a single day, four Fariñas buses were torched on the main highway.

“Ramos. Erap. GMA. Noynoy. Lahat! Presidente sila. May probinsya ako. I want stability in government, for every bureaucrat to be able to perform his role.”

COACH AND CUTMAN

Rudy Fariñas has a track record of influencing the outcome of a contentious issue. Here are just four of his latest bouts



1 As vice-chair of the House Committee on Justice, Fariñas helped prepare, present, and bring to a favorable result the impeachment trial of Ombudsman **Merceditas Gutierrez** in 2010. Gutierrez faced multiple charges, and is the second government official to be impeached. She resigned before the Senate could second the impeachment.



2 Fariñas served as House deputy lead prosecutor in the impeachment of the late Supreme Court Chief Justice **Renato Corona** in 2011. His closing argument, now widely known as *The Palusot Speech*, is considered a highpoint in contemporary political polemics.



3 The House is set to raise **taxes on cigarettes** next year, in a shift to a two-tier excise system. The bill has been opposed by multiple government agencies and farmers' organizations. Advocacy groups have accused Fariñas, along with three other representatives, of belonging to an alleged Northern Luzon Alliance, which railroaded the bill.



4 Fariñas, together with Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez and House Committee on Justice chair Rep. Reynaldo Umali, led moves to charge **Ronnie Dayan** with disobedience to testify about his alleged collection of funds from Bilibid inmates. Senator Leila de Lima was later indicted by the Department of Justice for instructing Dayan to ignore the summons.

That was the last straw for the governor. He quickly established communication lines with the insurgents, and sacked local officials identified with abuse, from *barangay* captains to fiscals. He began a Balik Baril program, aggressively assuring insurgents that returnees would be treated fairly. And, as a coup de grace, he negotiated through intermediaries to have the local rebel commander elected to *barangay* captain, and later the provincial board. "*Nakapagsalita na siya*," Fariñas says.

That, for the congressman, was social justice at its best. Economically, tilting balance in favor of the disenfranchised. Politically, giving voice to the powerless. They replicated this success across the province, and, by 1995, the local insurgency was all but pacified. Fariñas was later made chairman of the Regional Peace and Order and Regional Development councils, further expanding his clout.

"A *kala ko Superman ako*," Fariñas says of the height of his career. Such was his power that he weathered the highly publicized accusation of domestic violence made by his then-wife, actress Maria Teresa Carlson, who later on committed suicide.

But this was only one in what would prove to be a string of tragedies, which included the death of his father, closely followed by that of an older sibling. Fariñas also lost his congressional seat in 2001.

"*Simula noon, every day na akong nagsisimba*," he says. He then leans over and shows me a note app on his smartphone. On it is a meticulously recorded mass schedule: time attended, and city of location. I see entries from across the world, from Manila and Macau to Frankfurt and Paris. Times that cross the whole day, from comfortably late in the afternoon to unthinkable early in the day. The record goes back to 2011. And the list only stops on November 12, 2015, which is three days before his son JR died in a motorcycle crash.

It's been a year, I say. "*Nami-miss ko*," he confesses. He tells me that JR had been hit by dengue at the age of 9. One classmate who got sick with him had died. "So I was thankful *umabot siya ng 20*," he says. "*Ang dasal ko na lang, kung mauulit, ako na lang. Tatal ang dami kong ginawang katarantaduhan, karecklessan*."

I look at the second list. "Masses for JR" is the new heading. There are some 260 entries in it. Some dates have two, three entries. "*Yung isa para sa akin*. The rest, *para sa anak ko*," he explains.

"Very peaceful *kapag nagsisimba*. It is enriching for me." But then he turns blunt. "I'm not going to be hypocritical about it. *Hindi naman ako nagdadadal* the entire time. *Minsan may pumapasok na ideas*. So *nagnotes ako*."

So it's more of the quiet time, I press. He agrees. "*Walang tatawag. Walang TV. Dati*, I used to pray four sets of the rosary a day. While jogging or on the treadmill." That was his only break from his busy schedule.

These days, he has to monitor all 70 legislative committees, 59 of which are regular. After the past six months of the new administration, Fariñas's personal hope is a simple one: "*Sana makabalik ako sa one hour a day sa treadmill*."



Two Fariñas-owned buses were burned in a span of three months. “Kung matakot ako, magtutuloy-tuloy. So lumabas ako,” Fariñas says. He responded with a public speech threatening to go tit for tat. The insurgents were more than game, however—in a single day, four Fariñas buses were torched on the main highway.

That doesn't seem likely. Today, as majority leader, and representative currently on his third and final term, Fariñas continues to play the role that had begun when the Marcoses lost power, and the Aquino administration approached him to be the new government's conduit in the Ilocos region. This trend has continued through all the succeeding presidents, and Fariñas is not one to shy away from admitting it himself. It is at this point that he says “*balimbing*” himself.

“Ramos. Erap. GMA. Noynoy. *Labat!*” He is combative in his tone. “*Presidente sila. May probinsiya ako.* I want stability in government, for every bureaucrat to be able to perform his role.

Para naman hindi mapabayaang ang mga constituents ko.”

It's a mutually beneficial dynamic that administrations have been quick to seize, because Fariñas's ability to bring critical mass to a political project is unmatched. Despite his support for candidate Mar Roxas, for instance, Fariñas was approached by House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez to convince the former to become the majority leader. “*Kailangan ka namin*” was what he was told. There were, after all, just two other members of Rodrigo Duterte's Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan party at the time: Valenzuela's Erik Martinez, and Lanao del Sur's Jun Papandayan. That number is closer to 260 these days, forming a supermajority that rightfully frightens political observers with the thought of a legislature that can steamroll laws favorable to the new administration.

“*Iyon ang role ko.* Team player,” Fariñas says of the new majority. “*Pero hindi naman blind player,*” he qualifies. I ask what the line is, and he is quick to answer. “Common good.”

And no discussion of common good in the context of contemporary Philippine life can take place without touching on extrajudicial killings. “That's why I'm supporting the death penalty initiative of the president,” he says. Fariñas truly believes that Duterte has a broader grasp of the national condition, especially national security. “*Iyong death penalty ang hinibing niya* as early as the State of the Nation Address. So *sumusuporta ako doon.*”

I ask about the contradictions, and he is even in his reply. “As a devout Catholic, *medyo bindi*. If I would blindly adhere to our faith, *dapat hindi puwede, 'di ba?*” The line here, again, is common good, he says. He insists that if he were to exercise his conscience, it would set off a domino effect in

which every congressman would do the same, and nothing will get done. An unthinkable thing for the majority leader. “I can't have my cake and eat it, too. If I am against it, I have to quit.”

So there again is the Fariñas political philosophy. “*Iyon ang mahirap sa role ko,*” he concedes. “I am no longer Rudy Fariñas the person, but Rudy Fariñas the Majority Floor Leader.”

I ask if such a philosophy of governance is realistically replicable across the entire country, factoring differences in local cultures, the variables that lead to insurgency in the first place, the entire body politic that makes leading

tough for anyone but the most ruthlessly pragmatic.

“*Kailangan mo ng dedicated na tao,*” he says, with the slightest hint of fatigue in his voice. “You need someone to drive it. It involves a lot of sacrifices. And risk.”

He then goes back to an earlier topic of ours: his years of confrontation with the insurgency in Ilocos. When the Fariñas buses were burned, the elder Fariñas asked his governor son, “*Bakit mo ba sila inaantagonize? Inuubos na nila ang mga bus ko.*” But the younger Fariñas stood his ground.

“It can be done,” he later replies more directly. “Even in Mindanao.” But the key here is political will. “Admit the ills of government. Tell your people, I'm here to fix that. *Tulungan ninyo ako. May umaabuso?* Let's defang him. It's simple if you talk. *Yung kalaban mo, pumapatay. Kung yung lider matatakot, hindi mo masosolve.* Poverty will thrive. *Tuloy ang pondo pero walang pupuntahan.* Then you have corruption.” His voice then trails off, letting the vicious cycle play out in the silence.

By applying this political will, Fariñas stands to make his most profound impact yet, by moving discussions of the shift to a parliamentary form of government from the committee to the plenary level. To Fariñas, supporting this move is all but natural. Like Duterte, he has spent most of his political career in the local level. “*Alam namin.* Constricted *kami. Labat, mando ng central government.*” To his mind, it will be a kind of utopia for local governments, and defending a unitary state is as extreme as calls for secession.

“Let the community decide,” he ends.

At this point, we begin preparing for his shoot. He repeats the day's earlier refrain: “*Kung hindi lang ako nahihiya sa inyo.*” Still, it takes a lot of cajoling to make him dress up for the camera. “*Kagaya ba niyan?*” he says to me at one point, making a gesture at my sport coat. We laugh.

In the minutes during his absence, I replay the scene in my head. Was I just mocked? Or was I merely overreading an off-the-cuff remark? He comes back minutes later all dressed up, an effortless kind of sophistication: panache as afterthought. It is nothing like “*Kagaya ba niyan.*”

And that is how Rudy Fariñas has thrived in his career all these years. He can make you believe you occupy a similar same space, which, in truth, you can only ever speculate about, in the quiet moments between movement and inaction. Thus, to have him in your pocket is to have the whole of politics in your hands. ■

THE ROGUE

SEX

GLOSSARY

Now that a new word for male genitalia crops up every other day, keeping up with the times is pretty hard. From the wonders of a Diva Cup to the mysteries of felching, **Marga Buenaventura** gives you everything you need to know so Tito Sotto won't have to

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TIM LOPEZ

Anti-Discrimination Act

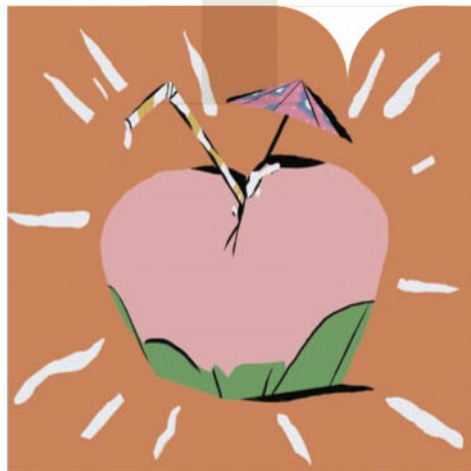
noun As the only law that directly concerns the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community, the Anti-Discrimination Act seeks to provide the same privileges to anyone, regardless of sex or sexual orientation. While it looks to prohibit a specific number of acts that unfairly discriminate against the LGBT community (such as situations in work and school), it does not aim to legalize same-sex marriage or unions. But do its critics see it that way? Considering how it's been debated over in Congress so far, we still have a long way to go before narrow-minded interest groups stop demanding for the most ridiculous things, like separate bathrooms and even separate schools for the LGBT. How the hell do we un-fuck this up?

Diva Cup

noun The Diva Cup is a commercial brand for the menstrual cup, an environment-friendly alternative to disposable sanitary products. This reusable bell-shaped device is worn internally and sits low in the vaginal canal. Unlike pads or tampons, the Diva Cup collects your menstruation for up to 12 hours. It's been around since the 1930s, and has gained popularity in the last few years as an eco-conscious solution to all the waste produced by other blood-absorbing sanitary options. Like the tampon, using the Diva Cup does not rob you of your virginity. Worried nuns, you can breathe a sigh of relief.

verb Felching, according to psychoanalyst Mark Blechner, is an example of sexual titillation and disgust. It's the practice of orally sucking semen out of the anus of one's partner (whereas orally sucking semen out of a partner's vagina is known as creampie). It's not a totally new term to describe analingus (but a rarely used one), and first appeared on print in 1972 in *The Argot of the Homosexual Subculture*.

felch



bench

verb To bench someone in modern dating is a lot like in basketball—that horrible feeling that comes with being part of the team but not quite being able to play the game. Benching happens when a person you date sends mixed signals, offering great banter on iMessage one day—then suddenly going quiet for a few weeks. This drives you crazy: you're totally done, you've forgotten about her, until she sends another witty text that makes you think, "Why'd I let this person go?" Benchers keep their options open just in case a better romantic partner comes along. Until then, they bait their existing prospects in the hopes of not dying alone someday. (See: Ghost)

erotic fiction

noun Erotic fiction has been around for centuries, spawning more iterations, thanks to the Internet. Back in the day, the *Kama Sutra* was one of the more graphic of sex books; today, we have even stranger erotic literature—sex with vampires, zombies, and the occasional Yeti. And where Internet erotica is largely limited to amateurs and fanfiction writers who want *Harry Potter* characters to have sex, publishing houses have been investing a lot of money to turn that thirst (see: Thirsty) into cold, hard cash. Chief of which is the *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy by E.L. James, which started out as *Twilight* fanfiction. More recently, the *After* series by Anna Todd is an equally graphic tome, one that originated as a sexy One Direction fanfiction story.

verb The idea of ghosting first cropped up in 2014, and describes the act of gradually disappearing from the life of the person you are dating—versus outright breaking up with them. Sometimes known as a "slow fade," ghosting withholds any explanation, leaving the ghosted party wondering where he or she went wrong. This involves, but is not limited to: seen-zoning messages, dodging phone calls, pretending to be out of town, then showing up at a party with someone new in tow. Ghosting is an act reserved for spineless losers who were probably never told that they had spinach stuck between their teeth, and therefore feel no need to inform other people about pertinent, important truths.

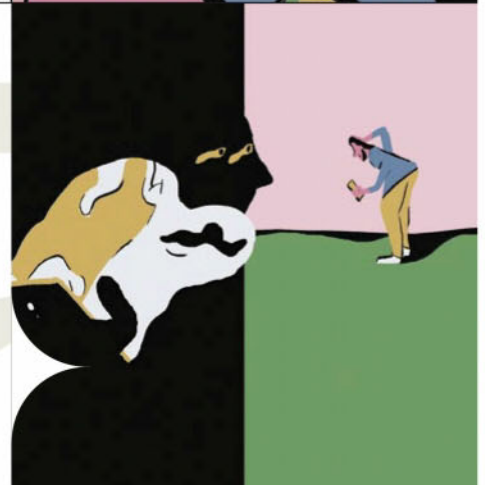
ghost

HBO

noun HBO is an American cable company owned by Time Warner and founded in 1972. It used to be that HBO showed us groundbreaking films like *Weird Science* and *Only You* starring pre-rehab Robert Downey Jr. In the last decade, HBO's Original Series has not only gained critical acclaim for its envelope-pushing work (*Six Feet Under*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *The Newsroom*) but also popularity among audiences for its proclivity to show nudity and a whole lot of sex. Best examples of late would be *Game of Thrones* and *Westworld*. Never mind that the storylines and character development can't hold a candle to HBO's earlier work—the people want what they want, it seems.

cockblock

verb It used to be that cockblocking was limited to the male species, in which the fragile male ego crumbles at the thought of another man getting in the way of his carnal desires. These days, cockblocking has expanded to not only refer to another person pursuing the same romantic prospect, but also ignorant friends who ask for car rides home (when said romantic prospect lives in the other side of town), or younger siblings who don't knock before they enter. The female version of this practice is known as "clamjamming," but this isn't quite as popular a term as the much douchier aforementioned.



noun Owing to how sexually repressed we are as a country, sex stores are few and far between in the Philippines. This pushed Ilya, a local online sex store, to encourage an open-minded attitude to sexual paraphernalia. With a youthful and bright brand identity designed by Serious Studio, Ilya seeks to get rid of the stigma and discomfort that come with buying your own vibrator, through helpful advice, clever word play, and quality products. Jumpstart your sexual awakening at shopilya.com.

Ilya

jacking off

verb Jacking off is a popular term meaning male masturbation (although recently it has also been used to refer to female masturbation). Also known as fapping or jerking off, regular jacking off, it is believed, contributes to improved health and well-being. An Australian study claims that men who ejaculate more than five times a week are a third less likely to develop prostate cancer, as disease-causing toxins build up in one's urogenital tract. So when you rub one out, you flush it out of your system. Still, that's not a valid excuse to jack off in the bathroom of your office in the middle of the day.

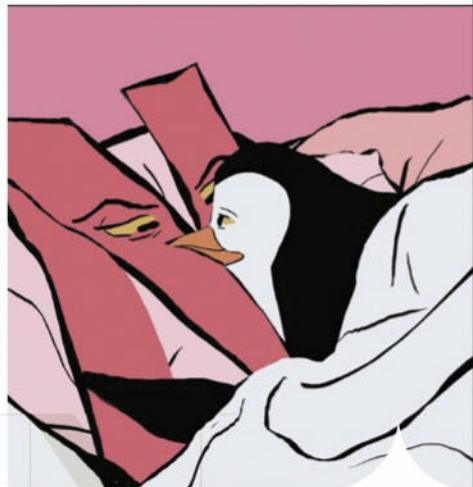
Kegel exercises

noun Also known as pelvic floor muscle training. Pelvic floor muscles are usually weakened by pregnancy, childbirth, surgery, and even excess weight, which may cause urinary or even fecal incontinence. To do Kegel exercises, you just need to know where your pelvic floor muscles are (try to stop your pee midstream. If you do, then you're contracting the right muscles). The exercises are applicable to both men and women and can be performed in any position at any time. There are even devices that help you do your Kegels while multi-tasking (see: Ilya). They're so subtle, you can strengthen your muscles down there while conducting a board meeting.



Mocha Uson

noun Before becoming the head cheerleader of President Duterte's administration through her blog, Mocha Uson was best known for being a sex-positive entertainer. She once maintained a sex column for *Maxim Philippines*, then educated us with sex videos on stimulating the G-Spot and how to put on a condom. In that capacity, Uson is a beacon of sorts, deconstructing repressive systems and showing us that, well, it's actually fun to have sex. But things changed: now that she's been appointed board member of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB), Uson has vowed to rid the small screen of what she calls "soft pornography." To borrow from *The Dark Knight*, you either die a hero or live long enough to become Mocha Uson.



noun *Lemonade* is the critically acclaimed sixth studio album by Beyoncé. As her second visual album, *Lemonade* featured a haunting hour-long film and dropped a solid lineup of tracks featuring the likes of Kendrick Lamar, The Weeknd, and Jack White. Most arresting about this album is Beyoncé's bold pronouncements about female sexuality, empowerment, and racial issues. With lyrics like "Who the fuck do you think I is / You no married to no average bitch, boy" in "Don't Hurt Yourself" or "When he fuck me good / I take his ass to Red Lobster" in the banger hit "Formation," Beyoncé paints herself as a vulnerable, sexual being and a certifiable queen of all things.

Lemonade

Netflix and chill

noun To invite someone to "Netflix and chill" sounds innocent enough, until you realize it's a euphemism for asking someone over to have sex, with Netflix playing in the background. The term first emerged around the time Netflix offered its streaming services, and started out innocently enough, until it evolved to mean casual sex around 2015. Now you know it ain't love if he just asks you to "Netflix and chill."



omnisexuality

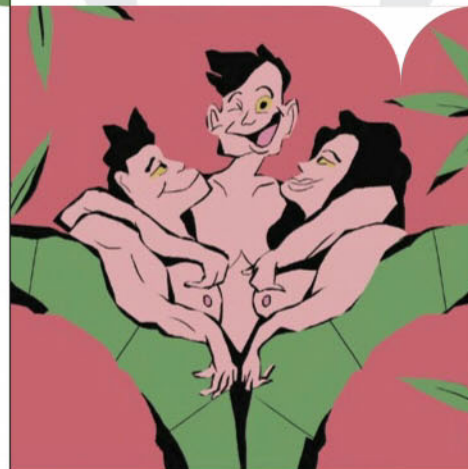
noun Omnisexuality is the sexual orientation in which attraction or romantic love is toward all people, regardless of their sex or gender identity. Omnisexuals call themselves gender-blind and are open to relationships with people who don't identify strictly as men or women (androgynous, cisgender, transgender, intersex), thereby rejecting the gender binary. (Not to be mistaken for bisexuality, or individuals attracted to two sexes or two genders.)

PrEP

noun Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is a daily pill for HIV prevention, a combination of anti-viral drugs tenofovir and emtricitabine. While the drug has a 99 percent prevention rate and no major side effects, it doesn't replace standard preventive measures like wearing a condom during sex or knowing your partner's sexual history. It also doesn't prevent other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), including gonorrhea and syphilis. With the Philippines among the 74 countries identified by *The Lancet* where HIV cases are on the rise, the Department of Health and World Health Organization are releasing PrEP in the first quarter of 2017.

queef

noun A queef is the sound the vaginal canal makes when it sucks in air and blows it back out. Also known as a vagina fart (because it sounds like one), a queef differs from a fart in that it doesn't smell or come from your digestive system. Queefing doesn't just happen during sexual intercourse (where your vagina expands from stimulation, allowing more air to come in), but also during exercise and other physical activities. As embarrassing as they are, trust us, hearing a vagina fart is not the most awful sound to come out of a bedroom.



noun The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012, informally known as the RH Law, guarantees Filipinos universal access to methods of contraception, fertility control, sexual education, and maternal care. Since it was introduced by Albay Representative Edcel Lagman, the RH Law has sparked great debates on whether the government should fund the widespread distribution of condoms, birth control pills, and IUDs. Of late, the Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order on the RH Law, hindering its full implementation. Until then, we can only hope that people don't think that pulling out is the only way to prevent pregnancy.

Reproductive Health Law



vegetarian

noun No to be confused with folks who observe a plant-based diet, a vegetarian is a person who strictly has sex with women. While the term is popular among the LGBT community and refers to lesbians, a vegetarian isn't necessarily a reference to one's own sexual orientation and gender; simply your preference when um, eating out.

noun To be a xenophiliac is to have an affection for all things foreign. It has been connected to cultural cringe, or a feeling that one's own culture is inferior to that of others. (cc: Filipino nation.) In the realm of dating, that probably means getting finger cramps from swiping right at all the AFAMs on Tinder.

xenophilia

noun The practice of serosorting (or serodiscrimination) involves choosing sexual partners based on their HIV status. A person chooses a sexual partner assumed to be on the same HIV serostatus (HIV-positive or HIV-negative) in order to engage in unprotected sex with them. While serosorting seems to decrease chances of transmitting HIV, it doesn't protect one from contracting other STDs. So however sure you are about your HIV status, it doesn't hurt to put on a condom.

serosorting

unf

noun Popular among Tumblr kids and straight up thirsty people on the internet, unf is the universal sound of fucking, or a suppressed moan during sexual intercourse. Meanwhile, to say "unf" to someone is to appreciate his or her physical attributes, a.k.a. checking out the hottie. Not to be mistaken with another UNF, the University of North Florida.



yuri

noun Yuri is a Japanese term that refers to a genre involving love between women in manga, anime, and other Japanese media. In Western media, yuri refers to sexually explicit woman-to-woman anime. But in Japan, the word simply means an attraction between women, whether explicit or implied. The inclusion of yuri in Japanese culture began in the early 20th century and is rooted in the belief that same-sex love is transitory, a normal stage in a female's development that eventually leads to heterosexuality.

thirsty

adjective Once describing the need for a drink, being thirsty now also means experiencing a sense of excessive desperation or eagerness. Consider it the new "horny" but less gross as it doesn't evoke imagery of Dirty Old Men picking up chicks on Ladies Night. Thirsty first appeared in the *Urban Dictionary* in 2003, but only recently became a term with sexual connotations.



weiner cousins

noun Weiner cousins refers to two men who have had sex with the same woman or women. In an episode of medical comedy *Scrubs*, Zach Braff's character explains that it's a bond "that's stronger than family." In the same episode, weiner cousins are required to hook their index fingers together as a sign of a connection that can never be broken. Gross, but also pretty funny.

zodiac signs

noun Knowing each other's zodiac sign is a typical way to determine sexual and romantic compatibility, but thanks to the increasing popularity of astrology gurus like Susan Miller and poet-turned-astrologers Astro Poets on Twitter, more and more people are sold on the belief that hooking up with someone with the right zodiac sign is the ticket to romantic success. Or maybe we just tell ourselves that because that hot Libra in the office still won't say yes to a date. ■



LUST, CAUTION

There's the whipping, of course, the hair-pulling and rope burns. There's the consumption of feces even. BDSM is hardly ever only about sex—sometimes there's none of it. As Manila's kink scene continues to gain converts and enthusiasts, **Mixkaela Villalon**, talking to two of its most outspoken frontliners, unbuttons a growing community's mystical overcoat. *Photographs by Brian Sergio*



"I'll be bringing my slave," Domina Fire informs me

through text when I secure an interview date with her. She is the "Asian Strap-on Superstar and Foot Worship Domme of Manila." That's what it says on her website, along with reminders that she is a busy woman who doesn't tolerate people who waste her time. I go straight to the point: I'm writing about the Manila BDSM (Bondage and Discipline/Domination and Submission/Sadism and Masochism) scene and need Ms. Fire's insights as the most popular professional dominatrix in the area. No way am I going to be late meeting someone who punishes people for a living.

I was referred to Fire by another of Manila's visible BDSM practitioners, Joyen Santos. "The Queen of Rope," she is the first and only openly practicing rope dominatrix in the country. Santos is involved in burlesque performance-style alternative entertainment, educational BDSM workshops, and selling kinky merchandise (joyenjoyen.com).

In a by-invitation bondage demonstration, witnessed by 20 or so people mostly young, some of them in casual clothing while a significant fraction goth-looking, Santos hogties and hangs a rope bunny by the name of Tomoe Gozen from the ceiling like a chandelier. She then climbs up Gozen's bound form, then swings back and forth with her from the rafters for a handful of intense minutes.

Electropop music blares in the all-black studio while leather-clad Santos deftly wraps yards of rope around Gozen's limbs in intricate patterns. Santos continuously tests the rope's tightness and security while engaging in short, whispered conversations with Gozen. When it was over, the women spooned and held hands, their eyes closed in the afterglow.

"I asked if she could handle the pain," Santos tells me after the session. Now untied, Gozen smiles and nods in a vague, dazed way. Isn't BDSM about pain? "There's good pain and bad pain," Gozen says. Good pain is what the

submissive expects to receive; bad pain is totally unwarranted, unexpected, and unacceptable. There's a lot of discomfort too, they tell me, but everything is negotiated and agreed on long before the ropes, hooks, and paddles come out.

"When people think of BDSM, they think of only one aspect of it. The play sessions with the ropes and spanking," Santos says to me at another time and place. We're at a coffee shop in the middle of a mall, surrounded by muggles who haven't got a clue of this taboo world I was peeking into. "Vanilla," Santos calls them (us?) with an affectionate grin. Today, she is not in her leather gear. Just a shirt, jeans, high boots, and purple hair. This is as vanilla as Santos gets.

Most people don't see the hours of preparation and aftercare of a BDSM session. "I talk to my subs before a performance. What are they open to? What won't they do? What's their pain threshold? After the session, I check up on them. Weeks after, I ask if they experience new pain."

Santos does this because the kink lifestyle is full of risks. As much as BDSM practitioners advocate for safe, sane, and consensual play sessions, they can't dangle a woman from the ceiling and expect it to be risk-free. Asphyxiation, nerve damage, and rope burns are some of the many real dangers of rope bondage. "We don't want to hurt people," Santos says then catches herself with a laugh. "Not unintentionally."

Kinks have long been part of the human psyche throughout history. Sexual practices we deem deviant today have been discovered in ancient writings and stone illustrations. The Kama Sutra has a section that celebrates spanking, hair pulling, piss play, threesomes, and orgies as long as all parties are agreeable. But dominant cultural, religious, and social factors have pushed kinks to the margins and draw the line between what desires and behaviors are acceptable and what are considered psychiatric illnesses and sin. In the last 30 years, however, BDSM has been on the upswing, invading pop culture through music, fashion, literature, and film.

Fifty Shades of Grey may have gotten a lot of things wrong, but it made it easier to talk about BDSM. The Internet is also a boon for people

who want to learn about the lifestyle and search for like-minded communities. Through websites like Fetlife.com, the Manila BDSM scene has grown steadily, with more and more people dropping in on its munches.

The Internet was also how Michael (not his real name), a German programmer, found out about Domina Fire years ago. While planning a vacation to the Philippines, he saw her website (dominafire.com) and signed up to be her slave for three days to the tune of US\$4,000 (nearly P200,000). He liked the experience so much, he has been coming back for more. This is his third time in the country with the express purpose of being her slave.

Fire turns out to be a prim lady in a long-sleeved houndstooth blouse and pencil skirt. She could pass for any other Makati professional, while Michael looks like just another foreigner in a shirt and jeans. There were little things, though: Michael rushed to open the door as Fire entered the coffee shop where we were meeting. "Come closer," she ordered when they both sat down and he immediately obeyed.

Six years ago, Fire was a registered nurse nicknamed "Shy" when a friend of a friend invited her to a private BDSM event held by a Filipina dominatrix who eventually relocated to Singapore. That night, the domme handed the bullwhip to Shy and ordered her to punish a white slave in a gimp mask. At the end of the session, Shy said she had it in her to be a top dominatrix. Domina Fire was born.

"I like this job," Fire says with a friendly and open smile. "I get paid well, people serve at my whim. I enjoy myself. I control my own time."

Fire is one of a handful of Southeast Asian superstars in the BDSM scene reputed for being hardcore. While Santos practices BDSM as an art form and calibrates her performances for a "strawberry audience" with both kinksters and vanilla people in the crowd, Domina Fire is a professional who caters exclusively to true sadomasochists.

"Am I hardcore?" Fire asks Michael and he nods sincerely after a moment's hesitation. Asked what being hardcore means, Fire enumerates the five things she will absolutely not do: "I won't kill a slave. Even if you beg, I

Styling by Ria Casco

Makeup by Apple Fara-on for MAC Cosmetics

Hair by Francis Guintu for Cynos Inside Hair Care

Digital imaging by Grace Sioson

Model Jach Manere of Professional Models Association of the Philippines

Editor's note: Model is not in any way connected to the local BDSM community



SIX YEARS AGO, FIRE WAS A REGISTERED NURSE NICKNAMED "SHY" WHEN SHE WAS INVITED TO A BDSM EVENT HELD BY A FILIPINA DOMINATRIX. THAT NIGHT, THE DOMME HANDED THE BULLWHIP TO SHY AND ORDERED HER TO PUNISH A SLAVE IN A GIMP MASK. AT THE END OF THE SESSION, SHE SAID SHE HAD IT IN HER TO BE A TOP DOMINATRIX. DOMINA FIRE WAS BORN

KINK 101

As with any subculture, the BDSM scene has its own parlance. Get a handle on some of its most common terms before taking a walk on the wild side.

BDSM

A complex acronym. Could stand for Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission, and Sadism and Masochism. Anything that falls within those fields can qualify as BDSM.

SSC

Safe, Sane, and Consensual. A standard many BDSM practitioners use to determine appropriate activities.

RACK

Risk Aware Consensual Kink. A contrast to SSC, RACK posits that all kink has inherent risks and what can be considered sane is subjective.

dom/domme

A person who exercises control, often over a sub.

sub

A person who gives up control. Whether all the time or for a predetermined period is up for negotiation.

slave

A sub who gives up total control of one or more aspects of their life to their master.

collared

A sub or slave who is “owned.” This usually means they are in a loving and intimate relationship. Joyen says that the BDSM collar sometimes has more weight than the wedding ring. “No one creeps around or tries to flirt with a collared sub.”

top space/subspace

An altered psychological state, likened to a hypnotic trance, experienced by participants in a BDSM scene. Often caused by the endorphin rush. Without proper aftercare or physical and mental decompression and analysis at the end of a session, this could lead to a sub-drop wherein a participant’s body plunges into exhaustion and may lead to lack of coordination and incoherence.

munch

A meeting of people who are interested in BDSM, held at a neutral, “vanilla” setting and in casual attire.

tribute

A gift given out of respect or reverence. Could be material or financial in form.



**MOST OF HER CLIENTS ARE
MONEYED AND POWERFUL AND ARE
INTERESTED IN RELINQUISHING
THAT POWER BEHIND CLOSED
DOORS. BOSS IN THE STREETS,
PIG SLUT SLAVES IN THE DUNGEON.**



**"I WON'T KILL A SLAVE.
EVEN IF YOU BEG
I WON'T DO IT...
YOU CAN FUCK OFF."**





won't do it. I won't leave permanent marks on a slave. I won't cut off any body parts. Anything with children and animals, no. You can fuck off. Some slaves ask if we can trample on cats when we play, I say no. I won't do anything with drugs either. Those are my rules. Anything else, let's talk."

As for the weirdest thing she's done, Fire says she's been doing this so often she no longer knows what's weird and what's normal. "I make them eat my shit," she says in all seriousness. Depending on her whim, she orders slaves to fuck large rubber dildos or has them have sex with each other. I'm inclined to believe that she really has done quite a lot because she and Michael kept exchanging stumped shrugs like they both didn't know where to start.

When pressed, Fire tells a story of another slave who wanted to be hogtied to the toilet and have pies thrown at his face. Santos mentions a kinkster who enjoys being rubbed by balloons and another who likes financial domination or being ordered to spend his money on his domme.

I turn to Michael to ask what a normal day for a slave is. He tells me he either wakes up from his cage or from being chained to Fire's bed and spends the rest of the day catering to her whims or being punished. He seems reluctant to go into details.

Why would anyone want to subject themselves to this? "That's an interesting question. I honestly have no answer," Michael says. Fire suspects that it has something to do with the rigidity of social norms. Most of her clients are moneyed and powerful and are interested in relinquishing that power behind closed doors. Boss in the streets, pig slut slave in the dungeon. "Most foreigners come to Asia because they think Asian women are submissive. Other foreigners pay me to kiss my feet."

Still, other people might have experienced some humiliating childhood trauma, and while society encourages healthy therapy to move past this, it never quite quenches the thrill of that moment. So they find a caring and stern master or mistress to explore that side of theirs.

The key is consent, and both Santos and Fire could not emphasize this enough. These dommes have their own process of securing their subs' and slaves' pertinent medical information and general consent contracts. "I will whip you until you bleed but you know what you're getting into," says Fire. "When you tell me to stop, I won't stop. But if you use the safe word, I'll stop."

"What do you call hurting someone without their consent?" Santos asks. "It's abuse."

Strangely, sex rarely figures into many BDSM relationships. Santos does not have sex with her male and female subs. Fire has about 500 slaves around the world who routinely come to the Philippines or fly her out to their country,

all expenses paid, so they can spend time with their mistress. Sometimes, she has married couples that serve her at the same time. She doesn't have sex with any of them either.

"I'm not a prostitute. Why do you pay me so much when you can just have sex with any prostitute?" Fire asks Michael and he nods. "I offer a special service that you can't get anywhere else. That's why they come to me."

Santos agrees. "Sex is so common. BDSM is everything else around sex. It's intimate. It's sexual. But it's rarely about sex."

"Sometimes you want something very much and you never get it," Michael explains. "The waiting, the anticipation. That's exciting."

I try to pin down what exactly is BDSM. Is it about pain? No, not all the time. Having pies thrown at your face is hardly painful. It must be about pleasure. But what's pleasurable about being rubbed with balloons or draining your bank account for someone? What else could BDSM be about?

"It's about what you want. Whatever you want," says Santos. "You can be anything." Indeed, you can be a top, bottom, dominant, submissive, a piece of furniture, or a human toilet. As long as you know what you want and you negotiate your limitations.

"It's about power," says Fire. Her clients relinquish their autonomy and submit to her power within their agreed-on framework of trust. It's courting danger and pain but being assured that there are still safety measures at hand.

I come away from the interviews feeling vaguely dissatisfied. While my talks with Santos and Fire were illuminating, I also feel like I haven't scratched the surface of BDSM. This black-and-red dungeon world they described melted away in the sunlight and mundane places where we talked. Imagine talking to mild-mannered Clark Kent about his exciting adventures as Superman, yet never seeing the Man of Steel in action. You get the idea but never the whole picture.

Hours after my interview with Fire, a new video is uploaded to her Twitter account. She's wearing the same thing she wore when I met her, a pair of leather gloves added to her look. Behind her, a naked man in a gimp mask, who I assume is Michael, is tied spread-eagled to the bed. Fire whips him until he's blotchy red and crying out. This is the Asian dominatrix superstar whose mind I wanted to pick.

I wonder about the woman I spoke to earlier, the prim and polite registered nurse nicknamed Shy. I wonder about Santos at the coffee shop, griping about the hair color she ordered that hasn't arrived. Do they put on a mask or a role when they don their leather queen-of-the-night gear? Or are these dominatrices real—and was I just speaking to their masks? ■

HEFNER
GUCCIONE
FLYNT

They exposed scams that lurked in the hallowed halls of government, solidified Marilyn Monroe's rep as sex icon, caused a furor when they splashed Jackie O's nude photos on their pages; all the while leading lifestyles that redefined the role of publisher as one that might include owning private jets, rotating beds, and a string of bombshell hangers-on. At a time when porn has been shorn of all glamour and extravaganza, one is pressed to find a triumvirate as cozy with spectacle. **Jam Pascual** revisits the lives of the erstwhile sultans of selling sex

THE UNHOLY TRINITY

“The major civilizing force in the world is not religion, it is sex.”
Hugh Hefner, *Playboy*

Considering the bloodiness of 2016 by way of celebrity death alone, it's understandable that rumors of Hefner's passing would spread like, well, insert “Playmates' thighs” simile here. The pin-up king and former *Esquire* journalist is certainly far from his hedonistic prime, but the impact of his work is undeniable.

Founded in the repressive era of the early 50s, *Playboy* became so huge that no one is quite sure which came first, the title or the trope. The bow-tie bunny icon is ubiquitous, plastered on shirts, cologne bottles, and casino buildings. One might attribute the power of the *Playboy* name to Hefner himself, who envisioned the magazine to represent the highest ideals of opulence and sophistication. In his youth, Hefner looked the part of a genuine *bon vivant*—his angular, chiseled face of the sexual revolution wielding a curved pipe. These days, Hefner passes off more like a Dirty Old Man who doesn't know when to quit, and his magazine likewise displays the same persistence. Sometime in 2015, *Playboy* rebranded itself to be a non-nude magazine, opting for a classier approach to sexy. Hefner's youngest son, Cooper, is being groomed to take his father's place as the magazine's face and symbol. And even with the staggering amount of porn online, sex continues to sell. The mansion still stands, the playmates still play. And Hefner, in his mansion, sits back in a silk red robe, going to bed at 7 p.m.

What you don't know about Hef:

You know you've made it when an animal is named after you. The *Sylvilagus palustris hefneri* (you can't help but feel the Hefner name was kinda shoehorned in there) is the scientific name of an endangered marsh rabbit native to the Florida Keys. Befitting, and not just because Hefner's name is synonymous with the Playboy bunny icon; the rabbit is also polygamous. Of course.

He's so rich... he's famously known for owning a round, rotating bed which he considers his most prized possession. In a 1966 interview, Hefner explained the logic behind the bed, saying that depending on the direction you want the bed to face,

you're treated to a myriad of views within a single room. It's the ultimate bachelor pad centerpiece. Only works if you're rich as hell, though.

Most Famous Get: *Playboy's* first issue on December 1953 had Marilyn Monroe on both the cover and centerfold. You might recognize the centerfold if you saw it—a nude study of Monroe, arm outstretched, against a red curtain backdrop. The image is reminiscent of a specific era of class, a time that grew out of the Roaring 20s but was raring for the sexual revolution of the 70s. That first issue sold out and pretty much guaranteed Hefner's success. It also solidified Monroe's place in Hollywood history as a sex icon.





“If you’re looking at a woman’s anatomy, it must be beautiful in all of its parts. We cannot take one part of the anatomy and say that this is vulgar and obscene, and the rest of it is okay, the rest of it is decent. That simply doesn’t work.”

Bob Guccione, *Penthouse*

The motivation behind the creation of *Penthouse* was, in a way, practical. The late Guccione, who was a painter before becoming a media giant, looked to generate a consistent source of income. The goal of the magazine, however, was audacious: to compete with—and outsell—*Playboy*, then already established as the boss of lad mags. But Guccione, with his trademark tenacity, took the sexual revolution of the 70s by the gonads and came out with a publication that prided itself on more explicit, more extreme, imagery.

It wasn’t just pornography that kept the magazine on the shelves. *Penthouse*’s heavily investigative writing was commended for exposing numerous government scandals—a claim to greatness not many porno mags today can echo. Yet as time wore on, Guccione and *Penthouse* failed to change with the zeitgeist. When the 90s made pornography easily accessible online, the magazine’s full frontal edge repelled advertisers. Add to that Guccione’s many failed investments (which include a nuclear reactor, of all things) and it becomes clear how the relentless shifting of culture could kill even a powerful title. It’s certainly hard imagining a magazine like *Penthouse* raking in profits today. It was huge for a time, and so was Guccione, but that time has, for better or worse, passed.

What you don’t know about Bob:

In an attempt to alleviate financial troubles, Guccione at one point offered Monica Lewinsky—famous at the time for her scandal with then President Bill Clinton—\$2 million for an exclusive tell-all, along with seminude photographs handpicked by her. Needless to say, she declined. It’s hard to tell now if a Lewinsky feature could’ve delayed *Penthouse*’s end just a little bit more.

He was so rich... he owned an art collection that included works by

Picasso, van Gogh, and Dali, a collection eventually sold at a Sotheby’s auction in the early 2000s to cover his rising debt.

Most Famous Get: An underage Traci Lords shook up the adult entertainment industry by posing nude and appearing in several pornographic films. *Penthouse* happened to be one of the magazines that launched her to x-rated stardom. Lords may not be famous by Hollywood standards, but try searching for a video of her on Pornhub; guaranteed, some sweaty-palmed dude is in the comments section for the nostalgia.





**"Politics is my hobby.
Smut is my vocation."
Larry Flynt, *Hustler***

In a recent open letter, Flynt blasted the mainstream press for its incompetency in fact-checking, accusing journalists of paving the way for the election of Donald Trump. This might sound confusing to those who only know Flynt as the founder of *Hustler* magazine; by criticizing the press he also talks shit at a president-elect who once bragged about sexual harassment. Though the statement is a political head-scratcher, it certainly aligns with Flynt's character.

Hustler in its heyday was crass—even by porno mag standards—so much so that its depictions of sex and lampooning of public personalities have repeatedly brought Flynt to the Supreme Court, making the adult entertainment colossus an odd but nonetheless significant figure in the battle for free speech. Interestingly, in his belligerence against those who told him to shut up, Flynt defended satire and parody as legitimate literary forms. And it wasn't just the writing. In 1978, Flynt was shot and paralyzed from the waist down by white supremacist and serial killer Joseph Paul Franklin, who took offense at a depiction of interracial sex in an issue of *Hustler*, something no other porno mag did in the day.

"Martyr" is not a title fit for Flynt, who at one point allowed *Hustler* to publish an issue with a cover of a woman being run through a meat grinder. Still, one cannot deny the impact Flynt had on creating American culture's rules on what could and couldn't be said. ■

What you don't know about Larry:

One would think that the man who landed on top of *Arena* magazine's 50 Most Powerful People in Porn would have lost his virginity to a cover model, a hooker, or a girlfriend. Not so—the first thing to receive the Kentucky native and self-described hillbilly's little Larry was, of all things, a chicken. When asked if he felt weird about it, or if the poor farm animal felt weird about it, he guilelessly brushed it off, saying, "It was a chicken."

He was so rich... he used to own a Gulfstream II private jet, which was used for the 1996 film *The People vs.*

Larry Flynt. The jet has since been replaced with a Gulfstream IV.

His Most Famous Get: In its August 1975 issue, *Hustler* published nude photos of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, which Flynt purchased from a paparazzo. The photos were originally leaked by her husband, shipping tycoon Aristotle Onassis, in an attempt to bully and humiliate her. Though the photos appeared in a smaller magazine beforehand, it was *Hustler* that circulated them widely, and was most responsible for the ridicule that Jackie O and her children experienced in the years that followed.

Agnes Arellano's relationship with Billy Bonnevie was once as intriguing, complicated—controversial even—as her art.

Ces Rodriguez uncovers how that has evolved into a comfortable and accepting commitment
Photographs by Milo Sogueco



THE
BALLAD
OF A G N E S
& B I L L Y





CREATIVE COLLABORATOR

Musician Billy Bonneyie at the home he shares with his domestic partner, the sculptor Agnes Arellano. The couple is happy to settle in, after a feisty youth.



**"MARAMI AKONG
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WOMAN AT WORK

With three decades of work under her belt, Arellano is still quick to examine both her aesthetics as well as her contribution to Philippine art.





"But is it art?"

At 67 years old, Agnes Arellano is not someone you'd expect to be asking this kind of question. For the last 30 years, the sculptor has built a body of work by scrabbling through a cornucopia of myth, iconography, Roman Catholic guilt trips, personal tragedies, feminist musings, archetypes, and the pursuit of ecstasies both pharmacological and tantric. Her work is famously represented by *Carcass-Cornucopia*, an upside down female figure with hooves for feet, spilling entrails and eggs from an evisceration revealing a Cordilleran *bulol*, a deity representing life and harvest.

She is speaking of the technical process of her work, the difficulty of using direct modeling with plaster, wherein the material you choose to model for the sculptural piece becomes the final material of the art. "I don't know if I want to keep doing that," she says. "The difficulty does not give it more worth. When you see it, you won't know how I did it." She pauses then adds, "But I really went through a lot doing this."

Then she loops back to the question that has nagged her and other artists through the ages.

"*Pero nandu'n pa rin ako: BUT IS IT ART?*" she asks in a growly voice. She thinks her art is old-fashioned, although she admits that she is not ashamed to say she does it for therapy. "I took up psychology so I could be my own first patient."

Billy Bonnevie, Arellano's domestic partner and creative collaborator for the last 25 years, ripostes, "If you see all these Egyptian Inanna, is that not art? Sculpture is being questioned now because it's form, it's figurative."

Arellano refers to the late conceptual artist Roberto "Bobby" Chabet, her mentor and teacher at the University of the Philippines' College of Fine Arts. "Like Bobby will tell you, that's art." She speaks of Chabet's 2013 work involving a labyrinth, and how a driver bumped and shattered the glass wall of the installation because the walls were so reflective. "*Sabi niya*, that's art. But he would encourage me. He didn't say anything nasty about my work."

To people he was close to, Chabet was vociferous about what he liked and didn't like. He would rip through works he felt played to a crowd; mock art that pandered to contests. His own art rested on ideas and intention as opposed to Arellano's solid, neoclassical work. "He makes you question everything *kasi*. You can't just be copying and leave your mind behind," she says.

Later, she would refer to him again.

"*Pagdating kay Chabet, itatapon mo labat yang pinag-aralan mo tungkol sa classical form. Gagarwa ka ng completely play.*"

We've moved from the dimly lit main house to her studio, a large, roofed structure with screens for walls. The breeze wafts through uninterrupted. Outside, the cocks Bonnevie raises cluck and crow intermittently. Inside the studio, the plaster molds of her life-size work stand like sentries.

Arellano admits that working in this style involves an irresistible gravity. "*Babalik at babalik ako dito*," she says. "*Tsaka gusto ko maganda. Ang pangit-pangit na nga ng mundo, pinapapangit mo pa yung papakita mo. Mag-inspire na lang ng beauty. Importante pa rin sa akin 'to.*" It's conventional, but," she pauses, "I really work hard at it."

But there is a place for every kind of art, I tell her.

She agrees, but adds, "*Siyempre, 'pag yung mentor mo ganun ang ine-exact sa 'yo, nagsa-strive ka towards that, only to accept that what you do and what you want to do is as basic as this.*"

Her distillation sounds bald; unfair to herself, as if "basic" were a dirty art word.

"So it's very derivative, but it's been mish-mashed through my own psychological processes in my research on myth. So that's what came out of me; I'm not striving for originality."

But Arellano is an original. No one else does what she does—you want to fondle her art even in the dissonance of the details—a pudendum (live-casted from Agnes's own) resting on the forehead of the Eshu, the male mediator between men and the gods portrayed as female. You want to run your hand up and down the smooth surface of her "army of dicks," a dozen 155-centimeter sculptural pieces in cold-cast marble representing circumcised and uncircumcised phalluses, only to discover that there are grotesque faces of old men carved behind each piece, their cleft chins a vagina. You want to rub the rounded luminosity of Haliya's belly; she is the moon goddess of Bicolano myth, supine in a bed of undulating sand and spread-eagle for birth. In APEC Naru Park in Busan, Korea, a commissioned four-meter granite version of Haliya lies on a grassy area, looking like she emerged from the earth, an object of play for kids and fascination for adults.

She mentions Julie Lluch, who also works in polymer, but Lluch's subjects are quotidian whereas she reimagines myth and archetypes.

Perhaps what's equally striking about Arellano's work is what can't be seen—the nuts and bolts she says viewers don't care about. Her pieces are cast from the mold of her own body, a process that limns her every curve and crevice, including the prominent metatarsal bone of her right foot.

She insists a woman should not be afraid of her body—she happens to idealize hers, she admits with a laugh. Recently, she cast her arm on a mold she first modeled in the 1970s. "*Parang ohhh; scrape, scrape, scrape!* Even the hand, I had to scrape off so much age. And arthritis," she laughs. But Bonnevie takes up the cudgels. "Why not confront our shame, our beauty through nudity? Why be afraid to show your body?"

For Arellano, it began with her Catholic upbringing. “*Marami akong resentments sa Church. When I lost my virginity I thought I had no more hope. I was desperate. I was crying and crying. Akala ko dead end na for a woman.*”

“That’s the cult of chastity,” says Bonnevie.

It’s also what led her to explore mythology and the feminine in her art. And what drew her to Bonnevie. Arellano recalls there was an electric thrill the first time their eyes met. Bonnevie, who once worked with Manda Elizalde during the Marcos years, was then a gadabout and a musician. He was a founding member of Pinikpikan, a group of visual and performing artists who improv’d on drums and other percussive instruments during concerts, art openings, and the like. It was loose and open and encouraged gallery patrons to join in the dancing and the drumming.

Arellano was already a stalwart of the art scene; lionized both as a sculptor and as founder of the Pinaglabanan Galleries, which was the site of the Arellano ancestral home, razed by a fire that killed Arellano’s parents and her sister Citas in 1981 while she was in a remote island in Spain. The gallery would also burn down several years later.

Bonnevie recalls how their friendship turned romantic. “It’s my nature. I think it was just natural to have—we’ve been together longer than her first husband. *Sila* 15 years; *kami* 24 *na ngayon.*”

He momentarily forgets Arellano had been married for 18 months to rock star Joey “Pepe” Smith. She was 23 at the time, hung around Pepe a lot, became a couple because “*ang cute namin,*” and got married because she wanted to bring him home. Her dad cried. The marriage was effectively over within six months, when Pepe almost burned the house down—twice—because he fell asleep with a lit cigarette.

The first husband Bonnevie was referring to was actually Arellano’s second, a British investment banker and family friend, to whom she was married for 15 years. Their daughter, Mishka Adams, is a jazz, Brazilian, and folk singer now based in London.

When Bonnevie’s friendship turned romantic, Arellano was still married to her second husband. She titters at the *chismis* she knew was going around, but the art circle remained circumspect.

“I’m 58, Aquarian *ako eh,*” Bonnevie says. “Ox *siya*, Rooster *ako*. It’ll be my year in 2017. Scorpio *siya*, though. *Delikado yang mga* Scorpio. Scorpio *lahat ng mga* girlfriends *ko* before; *hindi ako nadadala sa mga* Scorpio. It’s their nature to bite.”

But there was something else about Arellano. She was his first Filipina girlfriend. “Normally, I have girlfriends *na* foreigners. Maybe because I didn’t want to get attached. Three months is long, three weeks. By threes. Three years is *ops!* And maybe I was choosing the girls that would just leave also. It was like that. But you learn, you respect. I was in Europe with a French girl; we were in the Alps. She was my fiancée—”

“Bill!” Agnes interrupts his narrative as she calls out from the other end of the room, the handset of the landline

is clapped to her ear. “*Gusto mo bang* Coke; pizza, *papa-deliver ko.*”

“Okay,” he replies.

It’s New Year’s Eve. Arellano is ordering in lunch. The *manang* who cooks for them is off.

Bonnevie will resume telling me how Arellano has upended his aversion for dating Pinays—“*mahirap, pakipot, responsibilities, kailangan may bread ka, kotse, all that stuff.*”

Then Arellano sneaked into his line of sight. He was with a German girl and she was married. It was complicated.

But, “here comes a Filipina *na kailangan ko lang maging ako*. She accepts me for what I am.” When they began to see each other, Arellano’s marriage was on a slippery slope. But Bonnevie was open, visiting the sculptor’s Blue Ridge home with friends for parties and just to hang. A year later, Arellano was divorced.

So when did you realize this was more than a three-month thing?

“It happened six years later,” Bonnevie recalls. He had moved in by then and remembers how Arellano and Mishka sat him down. “They asked me what my intentions were or something.”

Arellano also told him, “It’s your prime.” Thirty-seven *na ako* when I met her [she was 46] and I never settled down, never.” He was footloose, hieing off to Puerto Galera, Sagada, or Mindanao at a moment’s notice.

“Wherever the wave is, *saan man ang* action. He really enjoys life. I was also with the bad boys, *sina* Robin Padilla,” she says.

He recalls Arellano asking him, “Are you in for the long haul?” But for me it was a restless soul finding peace. Too much mountain. Too many run-ins with the police. Too many one-night stands.”

Later, when he managed Mishka’s budding music career, he did so with little hand-holding. He taught her the ropes of the music business, having learnt from his sister, the pop star Lou Bonnevie. But he left Mishka with the nitty-gritty, including setting up rehearsal schedules and paying her musicians for gigs. When she was paid an advance for having signed up with the jazz label Candid Records, Bonnevie gave her all of her money and said she was responsible for disbursing it responsibly. They were lessons that paid off in the way Mishka is successfully handling her career in London where she now writes her own music, plays Brazilian music, and forays into jazz when it’s needed. Mishka would eventually introduce Bonnevie her manager as Bonnevie, “my stepdad.”

The pizza arrives and the conversation meanders as we dig into our New Year’s Eve lunch. Earlier, I wondered if they had somewhere to go. They did, they said, but now they like this settling in.

“This is it,” Agnes says. “*Wala kaming pa-costume party.*” ■

ARELLANO HAD BEEN MARRIED TO ROCK STAR JOEY “PEPE” SMITH. SHE WAS 23, HUNG AROUND PEPE A LOT, BECAME A COUPLE BECAUSE “ANG CUTE NAMIN,” AND GOT MARRIED BECAUSE SHE WANTED TO BRING HIM HOME. HER DAD CRIED. THE MARRIAGE WAS EFFECTIVELY OVER IN SIX MONTHS, WHEN PEPE ALMOST BURNED THE HOUSE DOWN—TWICE—BECAUSE HE FELL ASLEEP WITH A LIT CIGARETTE.

MAGGIE WILSON COMES FIRST





Ten years after her beauty tilt win, and fresh from her victory in *The Amazing Race Asia* Season 5, Maggie Wilson-Consunji is poised to take on the world.
Apa Agbayani speaks to the celebrity to trace future trajectories Photographs by Steve Tirona



THIS PAGE: **BULGARI** JEWELRY, **KURT GEIGER** SHOES, OPPOSITE PAGE **RAJO LAUREL** DRESS (WORN AS SKIRT), PREVIOUS SPREAD: **ASOS** SWIMWEAR, **RAJO LAUREL** DRESS.



Nothing frightens the world more than a complex woman. A woman who at once possesses intelligence and beauty, who takes on motherhood yet owns her sexuality, whose charms belie her unyielding ambition. It’s under the blinding flashbulbs and studio lights where we find a woman’s complexity most scrutinized, most policed.

Maggie Wilson-Consunji is no stranger to this tightrope walk, this fine calculus of being a woman in the spotlight. In a career spanning over a decade—that’s included modeling, acting, hosting, and competing as Binibining Pilipinas World in 2007—the 27-year-old has learned that the race isn’t won by leaving things to chance, but by preparing for the lay of the land.

On *The Amazing Race Asia*, whose fifth season saw her and her teammate, Miss Grand International second runner-up Parul Shah, best nine other teams of two for the US\$100,000 prize, we witnessed Wilson-Consunji’s consummate character at work. She began with extensive preparation, watching over 100 episodes of the show to build a nuanced understanding of the game. “I’m very competitive,” she says, “and when I go into a competition, I don’t want to go in blind.

“A lot of people have this notion that joining *The Amazing Race*, you have to be fit. Yeah, to a certain extent. For me it was more of a mental game than it was a physical one.”

Wilson-Consunji says she and Shah owe their win to a simple strategy: Race hard, but stay under the radar. Don’t get eliminated, but don’t come in first until the last challenge—the only one that mattered. “Parul and I played our beauty queen, damsel-in-distress part really well. We wanted people to think we were high-maintenance, and that we couldn’t hack it, couldn’t rough it.

“When they looked at us, they went, ‘Ah, weaklings,’” she says. “And we liked that. We loved that people underestimated us.”

At the final moment of the competition, we see Wilson-Consunji and Shah running hand in hand, soaked in sweat, driven to tears. It’s a potent moment of reality television. “Nobody saw it coming, not the producers, not even the cast,” Wilson-Consunji says. “And that made the victory all the more sweet.”

The Amazing Race Asia makes for an apt reintroduction to Wilson-Consunji—her blood, sweat, tears, and determination on full display in every episode. It marks her return to the limelight after taking six years off to start a family with her husband, real estate developer Victor Consunji, and raise their son, Connor.

Wilson-Consunji makes this return a little wiser, a little keener to express her truth. “I think you’re gonna see a more honest version of me,” she says. “Now that I’m older and more grown up, I’m very comfortable in my own skin, flaws and all.”

This newfound candor and cool are evident in our conversation. As she leads me through the story of her life, the travails of celebrity, and her hopes for the future, I get a glimpse of a woman quick on her feet, and mindful of the many changes she has undergone.

In her time away, she’s taken on the role of a mother, which is its own minefield. She describes herself as a mostly old-school parent. “When we’re at the table, you don’t see him on a phone or on an iPad. I want to raise my son the way I was raised. More outdoorsy, like, ‘Go outside and play, ride your bike or your scooter.’

“I grew up in Saudi Arabia, and living there was tough,” she says of her own upbringing by her parents, Robert James Wilson and Sonia Nales Wilson. “My mom raised my sister Elizabeth and me with no help, no nannies. For the first six months after having Connor, I didn’t have a nanny. I refused. I was like, ‘No! If my mom

can do it, I can do it!’ Then you realize, it’s so hard! So my mom came home and she helped me.”

This constant drive to achieve has been at the core of Wilson-Consunji’s life; playing just one role would never be enough for her. A self-professed control freak, she decided to study interior design at the School of Fashion and the Arts (SoFA), out of a love for the craft and a desire to put more of herself into the new home she and her husband were building for their family.

“From the beginning it was pretty clear to me that she was the kind of person that got things done,” explains Danielle Isabela, one of Wilson-Consunji’s classmates at SoFA. “She was one of the honor students. Always on top of everything and never settling, turning in projects that were frustratingly good. She has very good taste and knows what she wants, always very clean and elegant.”

Coming off her *The Amazing Race Asia* win, Wilson-Consunji will hit the ground running, hosting the return of *Philippines’ Next Top Model*. It’s something of a full circle moment for Wilson-Consunji, who got her first start as a model. “There hasn’t been a Top Model in so many years, so I think now it’s going to be interesting because social media is so big. We’re not looking for your typical model,” she says.

Ten years after her reign as Binibining Pilipinas World, and with feminism more prominently positioned in mainstream conversation, now feels as good a time as any to reevaluate the way we perceive our beauty queens.

“I think personality is so much more important now,” she says. “Social media has a lot to do with it as well; they’re looking for girls who are personable, who are not just beautiful but can also be role models. I think that’s how beauty queens are evolving, because now you really have to show vulnerability. You have to share who you truly are.”

Wilson-Consunji was a reluctant candidate for the position, even as she acknowledges that it was a necessary career milestone. “You know, at that time I was wearing Vans, so I really did not see myself as a beauty queen.” In the end, her sheer drive won out.

“I wanted to prove to the other girls that, ‘Yes I don’t want to be here, but I can beat you.’ Just like *The Amazing Race*, pageants are all a mental game—you can be the most beautiful girl in the room, or the tallest girl, or the sexiest girl, but if you don’t have confidence, if you don’t know who you are, what you want, what you want to do for the rest of your life, no one’s going to notice you. You really have to be sure of yourself.”

Asked what she wishes someone had told her at the start of her career, Wilson-Consunji says, “I wish I knew that people were going to be really harsh. Nobody told me. Growing up in Saudi Arabia, I was shielded from a lot of things. There were a lot of tears before I calmed down over things. I didn’t have people picking on me or calling me names, but, again, in this industry everybody ‘knows what’s best.’ You just develop thick skin through the years.

“At the end of the day, as long as you can sleep at night, you’re a good person, you’re not stepping on anybody’s toes, it doesn’t matter what they think,” she concludes.

With its growing respect for nuance in public discussion, 2017 also feels as good a time as any for people to make sense of the complexity of Maggie Wilson-Consunji as a woman—her candid wisdom, her maternal warmth, her penchant for artistry, her ownership of both her sexuality and her drive for success. Ten years ago, the public might’ve struggled with such a multi-faceted creature, asking her, “Choose one.” But once more, Wilson-Consunji is racing on terrain she has made favorable for a win. She will not apologize for her complexity, for crafting a life on her own terms. Instead, she invites you to behold the pieces she’s willing to share, so you can make sense of her yourself. Flaws and all. ■

THIS PAGE: **ASOS** SWIMWEAR. NEXT SPREAD: **ZARA** TROUSERS.



Styled by Patrick Galang
Makeup by Cristine Duque
Hair by Kiko Pedaza of Salon Privat by Jing Monis
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“I wanted to prove to the other girls that,





“Yes I don’t want to be here, but I can beat you.”

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SHOP LIST

Where to buy the products featured in this issue

TROUBLE WILL FIND ME, PAGE 56

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Finders Keepers Top and skirt; LCP Boutique, MDI Corporate Center, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig; 815-7510; finderskeeperslabel.com.au

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Muuno Swimwear; muunoswim.com
Helmut Lang Cardigan; helmutlang.com

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Beetroot Bralette; beetroot.checkout.ph

PAGE 61

Beetroot Bodysuit; beetroot.checkout.ph

PAGE 63

Muuno Swimwear; muunoswim.com
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Beetroot Bralette; beetroot.checkout.ph
Maticovski Skirt; tonimaticovski.com

MEET ME AT THE USUAL, PAGE 39

Guess Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati; 815-1665

Ermenegildo Zegna Rustan's Makati, Courtyard Drive, Ayala Center, Makati; 813-3739

Comme de Garçons One Rockwell East Tower, Makati; 869-3528

Rajo Laurel Powerplant Mall, Makati; 895-5688

Carl Jan Cruz 45 Bayani Road; carljancruz.com

Melchor Guinto 0926-702-1202

Thom Browne Univers D'Homme Et Femme, East Tower One Rockwell, Makati; 553-6811

Helmut Lang helmutlang.com

LUST, CAUTION, PAGE 74

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JOSEPH Black dress; SM Aura Premier, McKinley Pkwy, Taguig; 887-0188

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JOSEPH Nude top; SM Aura Premier, McKinley Pkwy, Taguig; 887-0188

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Jerome Salaya Ang Jacket; 2126 Jose Abad Santos St., Tondo, Manila; 0918-9199537

Bench Underwear; Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati; 625-3726

Charles & Keith Shoes; Glorietta 3, Ayala Center, Makati; 813-3399

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Bench Mesh shirt and underwear; Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati; 625-3726

Charles & Keith Shoes; Glorietta 3, Ayala Center, Makati; 813-3399



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JOSEPH SM Aura Premier, McKinley Pkwy, Taguig; 887-0188

MAGGIE WILSON COMES FIRST, PAGE 98

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Asos Swimwear; asos.com

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Rajo Laurel Dress; Powerplant Mall, Makati; 895-5688

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Rajo Laurel Dress; Powerplant Mall, Makati; 895-5688

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Bulgari Jewelry; Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati; 728-5061
Kurt Geiger Shoes; Estancia Mall, Capitol Commons, Pasig; 531-8419

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Asos Swimwear; asos.com

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Zara Trousers; Greenbelt 5, Ayala Center, Makati; 729-0845



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BY KATRINA LAGMAN / PHOTOS BY STEVE TIRONA
(ROGUE, AUGUST 2012)



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FAMOUS ROGUE

In celebration of *Rogue's* 10th year, we revisit our past issues to bring back previously-featured personalities, this time as Famous Rogues. Steve Psinakis was first featured in our State of the Nation issue in June 2008.

STEVE PSINAKIS, engineer and activist

HOW LONG DOES it take for a society to change its mind about a dictator? Not very long, it seems.

Just a handful of decades ago, Steve Psinakis was in the frontlines of dissent against the Marcos regime. He headed the Ninoy Aquino Movement in San Francisco, and orchestrated his brother-in-law's cloak and dagger prison escape from Fort Bonifacio. He had a verbal bout with Imelda Marcos herself, endured years of FBI harassment, and conducted over sixty symbolic bombings for a country not even his own.

Engaging in protest wasn't in his agenda when Psinakis first agreed to come to Manila, but he played that role just the same. And as we enter the post-truth milieu, his example—that it doesn't take long for someone to change his mind about courage—may just be what we all need.



Steve with son Yun on a sidewalk cafe in Greece.

"Truth is the strongest thing alive in a man's worth. If you are bound by the truth, you can never be defeated... because the truth does not change."

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