FOCUS ON FILIPINO FILMS
A SAMPLING 1951-1982
Tomorrow's technology created today.

Presenting two extraordinary films -
Eastman Color High Speed Negative Film 5294.
Its extremely high speed (EI-400) and exceptional latitude make it the origination medium for all difficult lighting situations.

Eastman Color Print Film 5384.
Great color and flesh tone reproduction. Sharpness. Minimum grain. Dependability. The film to take you into the future with color that lasts for decades.

Eastman Film.
The Medium of Tomorrow
Foreword

Though motion pictures were introduced to the Philippines as early as the turn-of-the-century, nothing of consequence remains of the first 40 years of its existence. Neglect, time, war, and the innate perishability of early film stock have taken their toll; so that now – for the contemporary Philippine cinema – the Past is necessarily an immediate one. Hence, the curiously recent purview of this present retrospective: 1951-1982.

Indeed, a number of directors included in this belated tribute have had their early work destroyed or lost and are therefore represented here by films made in their maturity or, towards the close of their careers. These are the fortunate ones; for others, like Manuel Conde, no such participation is possible at the present time due to the fact that their best works, e.g. the celebrated Genghis Khan, are no longer in Philippine hands, if they exist at all. Arrangements to borrow or purchase a copy of Conde’s film from the Cinematheque Francaise could not be effected in time for the 1983 Manila International Film Festival, but hopefully they will continue and yield results in the near future, thus serving as a cornerstone – so to speak – to the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines’ present archival program.

In the case of Gerardo de Leon – a giant of the Tagalog movie – who is here represented by Sisa, a film not generally considered a vintage work, archival considerations mitigated against the screening of the lone, extant prints of El Bibistamiento and The Motor Padilla Story, two of de Leon’s unqualified masterpieces. These two titles, already in the possession of the ECP’s Film Archives, await duplication before they should be screened anew.

Foreigners familiar with the name of Lino Brocka, and who may have seen some of his films showcased abroad, may well wonder why Tubog sa Ginto is being shown instead of such Brocka landmarks as Timbangkang Ka’Ngent Kudang Maynala and Insing. In Brocka’s case, the absence of these films from the present retrospective is owing to his growing international popularity. As of this writing, these titles have been included in the list of late participants at the New Delhi International Film Festival and are, perhaps, on their way to capture new audiences somewhere who have never seen a Tagalog movie.

In spite of these significant omissions, the directors included are representative of the local movie industry’s finest practitioners, and their films, of its best efforts. Composed of 17 voting members, the screening committee responsible for the selection had to contend with a number of factors that, in the final analysis, influenced the inclusion or exclusion of titles. Not the least of these given circumstances were the availability of prints or negatives and the condition of these same, the cooperation of respective producers, and the diligence and thoroughness of the people entrusted with the thankless task of tracking down the committee’s recommendations. Over and above these considerations, though, the screening committee considered the enduring qualities of each film’s style and content. Awards, even a string of them, and a legendary reputation were not necessarily determining criteria, except where their worth was revalidated in the committee’s previews.

More formalist-minded European cineastes will no doubt inquire if there is a “pantheon”, or indeed, “pantheons” implied in this selection as it stands. Other than that of chronological seniority, none is implied, although such an approach was at one point helpful in weeding out the current names from a much wider and varied array of their peers. Likewise, genre as a manner of classification was dispensed with, not because Tagalog movies do not fall into such patterns readily, but rather because the idea of “genre” itself imposed an external limitation upon the decisions of the committee.

It is worth mentioning that this retrospective marks the first time that so many Filipino films have been assembled and subtitles for foreign viewing. All other Filipino films subtitled in the past — not more than ten, perhaps, altogether — were those that had participated one way or another in a foreign competition. In undertaking to put together this retrospective, the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines, with some assistance from the Movie Workers’ Welfare Fund, has done a fundamental service. These films now constitute a core of works that can serve abroad as a more representative introduction to Philippine cinema than has been possible hitherto. It is to be hoped that this core will grow and broaden accordingly. (A few films in this section have not been subtitled in time for the 1983 Manila International Film Festival; these films were late substitutions or additions to the list.)

While the members all stand behind this retrospective’s program of Tagalog movies, they by no means feel that this panorama, such as it is, represents a definitive selection. At best it is an introduction, albeit tentative but sincere.

To assist the foreign viewer, a short synopsis of each film included in this retrospective appears herein, alongside a resume of the film-maker’s career. Ideally these resumes should have followed subtitled in time for the 1983 Manila International Film Festival; these films were late substitutions or additions to the list.

In any case, we hope that these write-ups will help locate particular works in their respective context, not only with regards the period in which they saw production, but in relation to the chronology of each director’s oeuvre. Hopefully, the information thus collated will add to, rather than detract from, the confusion and misunderstanding by our foreign guests of our country’s contributions to the universal language of the cinema.

— Rafael Ma. Guerrero

Mestizer, Filipino Film Screening Committee
Notes on the History of Philippine Cinema

by Ed Cabagnot

The Beginnings

The flickering images on the screen depicted, in a speed comically a beat quicker than normal motion, a horse-driven carrojaje ambling down the cobbled streets of Escolta (then the business hub of old Manila). Curious onlookers in the then fashionable ayay and camisa chino stare at you from the screen, eyes wide with awe.

The year was 1898. The film entitled Escuela was one of the very first shorts which documented Philippine scenes at the turn-of-the-century, produced by an American-based group. Along with these impressionistic street scenes were other shorts, no more than a few minutes in length, on other subjects. One recorded “battle scenes” between Filipino rebels against American troops (this short was discovered to be a staged piece, shot in the U.S. using “blacks” as the Filipinos); of course the “good” guys won. More authentic shorts included quaint vignettes on a festive carabao parade, the river Pasig, a sleek liner on Manila Bay and other interesting snapshots of the era.

As expected from a new art form, these shorts were, at best simplistic, featuring fixed camera angles, without the magic of the close-up nor editing (two filmic principles which would soon revolutionize the burgeoning art).

As the twentieth century progressed into its first decade, other experiments were attempted: two twenty-minute short features on the life of the newly proclaimed Philippine national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal. Rizal authored two “subversive” novels that cried out for reform against the Spanish rule and led to his martyrdom. The shorts were La Vida de Jose Rizal (The Life of Jose Rizal) and El Fusilamiento de Jose Rizal (The Death of Jose Rizal). The latter portrayed the hero’s death by musketry at the Luneta Park, then the favorite promenade of the old Manila.

In the early years, movies in the Philippines were produced by production companies owned by the Americans, although the talents employed were for the most part Filipinos. It was 1917 when Jose Nepomuceno and his brother Jesus founded the first Filipino film company, Malayan Movies, which, however, made its first film only in 1919. The film was Dalagang Bukid based on the musical comedy (zarzuela) hit written by Hermogenes Ilagan, but it was perforce a silent picture, with the live actors declaiming and singing on stage to match their silent images on screen.

In 1927, the American film audience thrilled to the phenomenon of the first “talkies” with the The Jazz Singer featuring a black-faced Al Jolson singing “Mammy”. Six years after, in 1933, the growing number of Filipino moviegoers got their first taste of sound on film with Jose Nepomuceno’s Pusyal Na Ginto.

By this time, film was fast becoming a popular form of entertainment for the Filipinos under their new colonizers, the Americans. Aside from the educational system reforms, the Charleston and other amenities, the Americans brought with them an influx of films. The impact of these films (primarily from the dream city, Hollywood) on the Filipinos was stunning – young girls bobbed their hair after the fashion set by the ‘it’ girl, Clara Bow; and men fancied themselves as Valentino dancing the tango during the local bailes. The vodavil (musical stage shows) and the zarzuela (oprettas) were all beginning to feel the pinch of competition that the new medium presented.

During the early thirties, entrepreneurs were discovering that the film business might prove to be a profitable, lucrative venture seeing the increasing enamorment of the public with film entertainment. The early Filipino producers included Jose Nepomuceno (Malayan Motion Pictures, 1917), Vicente Salambides (Salambides Corp., 1927) and Julian Manansala (Banahaw Pictures, 1929).

In the years that followed, several other groups were formed: Parlatone Hispano-Filipino, X-Otic Films, Cervantina Filipina, Excelsior, LVN Pictures and Sampaguita Pictures. Of the six, only the latter two, LVN Pictures under the leadership of Doña Narcisa de Leon, and Sampaguita Pictures under Mrs. Dolores Vera and Dr. Jose Vera Perez, were able to see it through in the following decades (up to the sixties).

The Golden Years

The years 1934 to 1941, according to some film scholars, marked a “golden era” of Philippine cinema. Film, then, was a purely entertainment art form, design...
ed to transport the viewer into an escapist’s paradise of light dramas, tear-jerkers, drama-musicals and romantic fantasies. Studio backlots, patterned after Hollywood counterparts, became a busy scene with two or three productions going on at the same time—a modern musical comedy here, or a period costume epic complete with dashing swordsman and languid princesses needing to be rescued there.

At the helm were a roster of directors that included such names as Ramon Estella, Gregorio Fernandez, Lorenzo P. Tuells, Joaquin Pardo de Tavera, Manuel and Octavio Silos, Carlos Vander Tolosa, Manuel Conde, Gerardo de Leon and Lamberto Avellana (the last two were ultimately proclaimed National Artists for Film in recent years).

Representative classics of the period were Huiling Habi-fin and Buenavista by Estella, Manuel Silos’ Ayl! Kbigud!; Octavio Silos’ Pakitungpaw; Carlos Vander Tolosa’s Gilitx Ro, Bitaung Marikit and Diiwata ng Karagatan; Conde’s Villa Hermosa, Cagiteteo and Ibong Adarna (also the first film to use color in some sequences); Avellana’s Sakay and Gerardo de Leon’s Ama’t Anak.

While the world throbbed to the likes of Gable and Harlow, Garbo and Dietrich, Astaire and Rogers and a starry host of Hollywood luminaries (all made to appear larger than life by the silver screen), local film audiences had their own pantheon of film demi-gods and goddesses.

 Stellar attractions of the period included Carmen Rosales, Rogelio de la Rosa, Leopoldo Salcedo, Elsa Orta, Fernando Poe Sr., Jose Padilla Jr., Ely Ramos, America Francisco, Rosario Moreno, Tita Duran, Yolanda Marquez, and Angel Esmeralda, Rudy Concepcion, Lucita Goyena, Corazon Noble and Milla del Sol.

Philippine cinema, during the period, was primarily star-centered. And all the stars, except for quite a few, were mestizos—fair-skinned lookers, a mixture of Filipino and foreign blood. The public expected that only specific roles or types could be played by them—a sweet Milla del Sol, perhaps, would cause public outrage if she lit a cigarette.

By the same token, we had our own fair share of contravadas (vamps, villains and character actors), to act as foils to the do-good darlings. If Hollywood had their Lugosi, Karloff or Beery, local audiences enjoyed hating or fearing the likes of Johnny Monteiro, Bimbo Dano or the seductive Rosa Rosal.

A lot of the storylines for these films had as a favorite source the magazines and the kantiiks such as Liwayway, Bululak and a proliferation of others. These publications, as well as the radio medium, presented citations to boxoffice stars and films. These citations may be said to be forerunners of the industry awards to come in the following years.

Box-office results were the prime factor in determining the success of a film and the staying power of the film stars. The most popular stars packed in the movie fans into such theatres as the art-deco Bellevue Cafe in Paco, the Society Theatre and other movie houses in downtown Manila.

The biggest competitor of our films was the foreign film, particularly the Hollywood movies. Another, but weaker rival, the madezack, or variety stage shows, became a major source of the film talents, particularly the comedians such as Pugo and Tugo, Lopito, Patay and others.

The Lull

With the outbreak of the Second World War, the so-called “golden age of Filipino films” drew to an abrupt close. The Philippines came under the rule of the militant Japanese invading forces. Industries came to a halt, all matters had to pass Japanese censorship, including the cinema industry.

Vaudeville again took center stage as entertainment for the public, in Manila and the provinces. The moviehouses were transformed into stage theatres. The entertainment fare consisted mostly of light musicals and farces with double-entendres making fun of the general situation.

Despite the war, a few pictures managed to be made, the most outstanding being Gerry de Leon’s Talating Maria.

To act as censors, a central exchange for all films was established, the Eiga Heisuka. The few films produced within the period of 1942 to 1945 were predictably open propaganda films commissioned by the Japanese.

The Reconstruction

1946 saw the end of the war. The country, like all others affected by the war, was thrown into the flurry of reconstruction. As the year 1946 proceeded, things slowly started going back to normal. Cinema houses began to open with the usual attractions from Hollywood.

The pre-war stars, actors, directors and film crafts-
men went back to work, with a few fresh faces along with them.

The first film to be produced after the war was Manuel Conde’s *Orang Ginto* which starred Mila del Sol under the aegis of LVN Pictures.

Conde also directed for his own company the costume epics *Prinsipe Paris and Sieta Infantes de Laru* (1949) which started a series of swashbucklers. Among the films in this genre was *Prinsipe Amante* by Lamberto Avellana. The escapist streak was still to be found in the films, if not more so.

But not all films were produced strictly to pander to the public’s commercial tastes. The better-made films of Gerardo de Leon, Manuel Conde, Cesar Gallardo and other more aesthetically-minded directors lend the era a nostalgic gloss, leading some film scholars to call it the Golden Age of local cinema. Among these were Manuel Conde’s *Genghis Khan*, Avellana’s *Anak-Dalita and Badjao*, Gerardo de Leon’s *Siua, Diego Sting, Teyug (Ang Bayang Api)*, and *So Long, America*, and Ramon Estella’s *Ako Raw Ay Huk*.

The first legitimate awards for artistic recognition in Philippine cinema were the Maria Clara awards in 1950. In the first of these awards, Gerry de Leon’s *Kumay Ni Satanas* bagged the Grand Prix, and in the following year (1951), *Siua* won the award again for him. These awards were short-lived and were soon replaced by the FAMAS Awards given out by the newborn Filipino Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The first film to win a FAMAS in 1952 was *Sa Se Luang Simboryo*, also by Gerry de Leon, which showed the talents of Anita Linda and Jose Padilla Jr.

The popular films of the era were still the light romantic comedies, the musical and the drama. A particular hit was the *Darna* series which featured the Philippine version of Super Girl and Wonder Woman in one. So was Sampaquita’s *Roberta* which portrayed the trials of a little girl played by Tessie Agana (local film director Shirley Temple). In truth, the local film scene contained a lot of personalities patterned after their Hollywood and European counterparts.

Some of the more controversial films of the era were Estella’s *Ako Raw Ay Huk*, which in 1947 caused a big furor with the censors for ‘political’ reasons. So with Gerry de Leon’s *Si Ewa At Si Adam*, for totally different reasons, as the title implies.

One of the most tragic events that happened during the period was the burning of Sampaquita Pictures Studios, when all their master negatives and prints of films produced before the war were destroyed. The same mishap occurred in some other studios — primarily because of the highly flammable type of film used then.

In 1949, the industry came out with the first full-color films, LVN’s *Battalion XIII* and Premiere’s *Ang Luang Bahay sa Guadalo*.

A Decline

The sixties saw an increase of film production but also a decline in film artistic quality. The name of the movie game was still “box-office” — this, at all expense. Big-name stars appeared in role after role of the same timbre and qua-

lity, the plots remained vacuous and inconsequential.

The star system was so strong that more and more of the top studio contract artists began to create their own production outfits.

But films of notable quality were still made despite the general run of commercialism. Again, Gerry de Leon showed his artistic mettle in transforming Rizal’s works of prose into film with *Noli Me Tangere* (1961) and *El Filibusterismo* (1962). His *Moises Padilla Story* produced in October 1961 is still considered one of the best Filipino films ever made.

The early 70’s saw the rise of the *black film* — films which exploited sex and the unusual laxity of the Board of Censors during that period. Films like *Ukaw* and *Nympho* were being churned out by money-minded producers in answer to the influx of foreign films that depicted sex overtly.

The New Wave

A breakthrough came at the start of the seventies with the introduction of two independent-minded auteurs, Lino Brocka and Ishmael Bernal. Bernal’s first work, *Pagdating Sa Dulo* (1971) still remains one of the best debut works of any director; while Brocka received critical acclaim for his *Tinimbang Ka Ng Namit Kulang* (1974) and *Maynila: Sa Mga Kuko ng Liwanag* (1976).

In 1970, a group of local film critics formed themselves into the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino — a group which, each year, awards citations to the best of the year’s crop of locally produced films.

Aside from Bernal’s *Pagdating...* and Brocka’s *Maynila...*, five other works have been cited by the Manunuri as the “Best of the Seventies.” The others are Mike de Leon’s *Zima*, Eddie Romero’s *Ganito KamI Noon, Paano Kaya* *Ngayon*, Bernal’s *Nunal sa Tubig*, and Brocka’s *Insang and Jaguar*. Other outstanding films of the decade were *Mario O’Hara’s Talatang Wawalang Diosa* and *Lupita Gomez’s Minna’s Ang Gamang*.

As Philippine cinema entered the 80s, two women directors broke through to gain a place in the front ranks of our better directors — Marilou Diaz Abaya with *Brutal* (1980) and Laurice Guillen with *Salome* (1981).

The Wider View

In the past few years, the Filipino film has slowly been gaining international awareness, particularly in Europe. In France, the United Kingdom and other film centers, retrospectives on Philippine Cinema have been included in festivals and film programmes. These festivals have included exhibitions of Filipino classics like Conde’s *Genghis Khan*, Gerry de Leon’s *48 Oros*, the two Avellan’s works which won Asian Film Festival Golden Harvest Awards (*Badjao and Anak Dalita*), Silot *Riyoga Ng Lupa* and Lino Brocka’s widely acclaimed *Maynila... Insang, Jaguar and Bona*.

In the coming year, 1983, at least three international film festivals will be featuring retrospectives highlighting our films. Truly, international prospects for the Filipino film are beginning to look brighter.

The Future

As an offshoot of the successful 1982 Manila International Film Festival and to meet the growing demand for quality Filipino cinema, the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines was created in January of 1982.

The ECP aims to foster film appreciation by a wider audience, particularly the youth; to present the best in cinema through a regular program at the Manila Film Center and outreach outlets; to produce, finance, subsidize and otherwise encourage the production of good films; to preserve Filipino films and other related materials in a proper archive; and to expand the market for Filipino film overseas.

But the over-riding objective of the ECP is to pave the way for a healthy, thriving film industry in the Philippines conducive to the creation of masterworks and competently crafted significant films by Filipino film artists and craftsmen.
Marilou Diaz-Abaya

Only 27, Marilou Diaz-Abaya is already one of the most dynamic and important film directors in the Philippines. She is part of a new breed of directors who are film school-trained; in her case, at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles where she earned an M.A. in film and television (1978) and at the London Film School where she got a Diploma in Film (1979).

The pattern of her career was set early by her parents who encouraged her into everything that had to do with the arts—ballet, piano, painting and theatre. High school and college (Assumption Convent, Communication Arts major) found her involved in numerous plays, starting out as a member of the crew, then dramatically snatched out from behind to interpret lead roles.

In retrospect, her interest and excitement in the theatre prepared her admirably to get into films. It was during her stage beginnings that she forged a significant friendship with Amang Santos, Greg de Guzman and Manolo Abaya, who all eventually went through formal training in film-making abroad. Towards the end of 1979, the four of them formed a film outfit, Cine Filipinas Inc, hiring themselves out as a technical team.

(In 1977, while deep into her thesis at the London Film School, Marilou had married Manolo, who has been the cinematographer and film editor of all her films.)

She has made so far five films: Tanikala, Brutal, Macho Gigolo, Boy’s Town and recently Moral.

Moral, shown in the 1982 Metro Manila Film Festival, is a highly original work that traces the lives of four middle-class, liberal-educated women as they struggle to find meaning in their lives in an amoral modern society. It jumps one theme ahead over her earlier work Brutal, which is about the "brutalization" of the Filipino at the hands of the Filipino male.

The Brutal women are still told by their husbands to stay at home and serve them. The Moral women have found their freedom, striking out into the world on their own, realizing in the end that any which way you go, the modern world offers no answers except anguish and pain.

When asked what she hopes to accomplish in ten years with regards to her career, the strongly feminist Ms. Abaya said, "I hope to have a body of work on women, children and religion."

— Ishmael Bernal

Brutal
1980
Color, English subtitles
Direction, Marilou Diaz Abaya; Screenplay, Ricardo Lee; Cinematography, Manolo Abaya; Production Design, Don Escudero; Music, George Canseco; Editing, Manolo Abaya, Mark Tamate; Sound, Amang Sanchez, Rolly Ruta. Produced by Bancom Audiovision Corp.

Cast
Amy Austria (Monica Real), Gina Alajar (Cynthia), Charo Santos (Clara Valdez), Jay Ilagan (Monica’s husband), Johnny Delgado (Clara’s lover), Perla Bautista (Monica’s mother) and Nello Naya (Monica’s father).

Synopsis
Monica Real is arrested for the murder of her husband and his two friends. Only she knows the reason for the crime, but she is in a trauma. Monica’s case draws the interest of Clara Valdez, a feminist and journalist who is living in with a young executive. In her investigation of the case, Clara talks to Monica’s mother, who tells her of Monica’s timidity and her rape by the man she eventually married. Clara also meets Cynthia, who reveals Monica’s “other” personality, which stemmed from her association with the sexually wayward Cynthia. In the end, Clara convinces Cynthia to pay Monica a last visit. The patient finally speaks and tells of the sexual humiliations that drove her to murder.

Awards and Recognition
Best Picture, Best Direction, Best Screenplay, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actress, Best Supporting Actor, Best Editing, 1980 Metro Manila Film Festival. Nominated for Best Picture, Best Direction, Best Screenplay, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actor, 1980 Uran Critics’ Award.

Philippine Official Entry
1983 MIFF Competition
Moral
1982
Color, English subtitles
Direction, Marilou Diaz-Abaya; Screenplay, Ricardo Lee; Cinematography, Manolo Abaya; Production Design, Fiel Zabat; Music, George Canseco; Editing, Manolo Abaya and Mark Tamate; Sound, Amang Sanchez. Produced by Seven Stars Production.

Cast
Lorna Tolentino (Joey), Gina Alajar (Kathy), Sandy Andolong (Sylvia), Anna Marin (Marriess)

Synopsis
The film traces the lives of four women, neither heroines nor villains. From 1979 to 1982, Joey is a promiscuous drug user who bums around, finding no connections with people. Kathy cannot accept the fact that she is a mediocre singer, and aims for the big-time. Sylvia finds security only in the love of her ex-husband who is now living in with another woman. Mariess performs the conventional role of a housewife dominated by a macho husband who makes her pregnant her every year.

What happens to these four women as they try to make connections with one another and eventually with their real selves, choosing from life’s options and settling for less, gaining strength from small victories, constitutes the core of the film.

Awards and Nominations
2nd Best Picture and Best Screenplay, 1982 8th Metro Manila Film Festival
Also nominated for: Best Actress, Best Supporting Actress, Best Director, Best Story, Best Cinematography, Best Editing, Best Production Design.

A catatonic Amy Austria in Brutal.

The Moral gang of four: from left, Lorna Tolentino, Sandy Andolong, Anna Marin and Gina Alajar.
Lamberto V. Avellana

Lamberto V. Avellana is a pillar of Philippine cinema. One of the few living witnesses to the growth and development of Filipino movies, Avellana began auspiciously as a stage director at the Ateneo de Manila, from where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1938. With his wife, the former Daisy Hontiveros, he founded in 1939 the Barangay Theater Guild, which pioneered in the presentation of legitimate plays.

Avellana moved into film at a time when the studio system was just emerging. His first film, Sekay (1957), was a landmark in Filipino filmmaking because it marked, in the words of film critic T.D. Agcaoli, “the introduction of a truly creative Philippine cinema, performing organically in film some of the elements of modern stagecraft and dramaurgy that had been lacking in Filipino movies.”

Avellana’s direct contribution to Philippine cinema, however, is his use of cinematic techniques, in particular,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avellana’s Films</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1939 Sekay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940 Alagatap</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941 Ikaw Pula</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946 Death March</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947 Hucudola</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948 Ata Viva</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949 Roncillo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950 Ang Bombero</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951 Amor Mio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952 Aldad ng Bahay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953 Ilaya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954 Dumog Ligaw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955 Saydwick Bendor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956 Anak-Dalita</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959 Crying Freedom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960 Servant Heer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963 Death Was a Stranger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966 Operation XYZ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967 The Exile Within</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970 The Exile Within</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971 Claudio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974 Ang Bukas at Ating Fall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975 Ang Pagbabalik</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977 Laging Filipino2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981 Wayways</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the mise-en-scène, which at the time was unheard of among directors who merely used their cameras to tell a story. In short, it was Avellana who first “discovered, exploited and enriched” the idiom of film in the country.

Aside from this, it was Avellana who first rebelled against the prevailing popularity of saccharine romances and superficial melodramas. Through his treatment of stories with serious themes and three-dimensional characters, he successfully mixed the significant issues of his time with the conventions of Filipino movie-making.

According to T.D. Agcaoli, Avellana destroyed the recessive myths of the film industry, e.g., the bakya crowd being “unperceptive” and “socially unaware,” and therefore deserving only of escapist fare, and the hoary one about big-name stars being necessary to the making of a good movie.

To counter escapism, Avellana chose to depict “real” Philippine reality. As he himself put it: “I like reality in depth. I like to see dust in nobility — in its rawest form. I prefer my audience to sit back and identify with the characters. I also like my characters to mirror human imperfections, speaking down-to-earth dialogue, the way authentic people speak. And sex is the part of the film that puluates.”

Avellana is further credited with having mentored some of the country’s most distinguished thespians, from Leopoldo Salcedo, Rosa Rosal and Tony Santos, to Vic Silayan, Chari-to Solis and Leroy Salvador. In the films he directed for these actors, Avellana was so consistent and successful in drawing out excellent performances from them that the term “Avellana touch” became synonymous with good acting.

Avellana’s best films are some of the finest examples of contemporary Filipino cinema. Anak-Dalita (1956) dealt with the “cave dwellers” of war-ravaged Intramuros, who, disposed of practically everything, managed to survive and hold on to their dignity. On the other hand, Badjao (1957) painted an idyllic picture of the day-to-day existence of a sea-faring people in Mindanao. Kangdan ng Lahi (1959) dramatized a woman’s difficulties in love and life, while Portrait of the Artist as Filipino (1966) translated into film Nick Joaquin’s dramatic elegy on the death of Intramuros and of pure ideals in life and art.

Many of Avellana’s films have been recognized here and abroad. Anak-Dalita was the first Filipino film to win the Grand Prix for Best Picture in the Asian Film Festival in 1956. Badjao likewise won ad hoc awards in the same festival in 1957. His films have also found their way into many international festivals, including Vancouver, Edinburgh, Coronado, San Francisco, Cannes and Frankfurt.

Besides being a highly acclaimed film-maker, Avellana also pioneered in the making of intelligent, well-crafted documentary films. Among his best works are La Campaña de Baler (1961) and El Logroño (1959), which have won him International Prestige Awards from the Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences (FAMAS). The highest point in his forty-year career as drama and film director is the National Artist Award, conferred on him in 1976, in recognition of his “rare excellence and significant contribution to the growth of Filipino drama and film.”

— Agustin V. Sotto
Anak-Dalita
Child of Sorrow
1956
Black and white, English commentary

Direction, Lamberto Avellana; Screenplay, Rolf Bayer; Cinematography, Mike Accion; Production Design, Teody Carmona; Editing, Enrique Jarlego; Music, Francisco Buenacamino; Sound, July P. Hidalgo. Produced by L.V.N Pictures.

Cast
Rosal Rosal, Tony Santos, Joseph de Cordova, Vic Silayan, Leroy Salvador, Rosa Aquire, Oscar Kreese

Synopsis
The story takes place in the slum settlement within Intramuros, the old Walled City of Manila built by the Spaniards. The time is the 50s. A war hero (Tony Santos) returns from Korea to find his mother on her deathbed. He meets one of the slum residents, a notorious prostitute (Rosa Rosal) and moves in with her. A deep relation develops between the two, but they are both so poor that the man later decides to take up with a friend who is a smuggler (Joseph de Cordova). His paramour manages to save him from the authorities, but he is beaten up by his smuggler-friend. Finally, there is a shoot-out between him and the smuggler, ending in the deaths of the latter and the prostitute's younger brother. At film's end, the slum residents are resettled in another district, as the war veterans and the prostitute take up their life together.

Awards
Golden Harvest Award (Grand Prix), Best Picture, 1956 Asian Film Festival

Badjao
The Sea Gypsies
1957
Black and white, English subtitles

Direction, Lamberto Avellana; Screenplay, Rolf Bayer; Cinematography, Mike Accion; Production Design, Teody Carmona; Editing, Enrique Jarlego; Music, Francisco Buenacamino Jr.; Sound, July P. Hidalgo; Choreography, Francisca Reyes Aquino. Produced by L.V.N Pictures.

Cast
Rosal Rosal, Tony Santos, Leroy Salvador, Joseph de Cordova, Vic Silayan, Oscar Kreese, Pedro Faustino

Synopsis
Love and understanding finally win out in the story of a youth and a maiden from rival tribes who break century-old precedent and marry each other. The youth is a Badjao, a non-Muslim tribe in the Philippines South that lives in villages erected on the water's edge and plies the sea for food and pearls. The girl belongs to a Muslim tribe that holds the soil for a living; they look down on the non-Muslim tribes.

Hassan (Tony Santos) is the son of the Badjao chief and is consid- ered the tribe's best pearl diver. One day, he is attacked by Muslim marauders and his boat destroyed. With his father and other Badjao elders, he goes to the Muslim village to formally demand that they be allowed to live on the waters around the Muslim lands.

Tony Santos and Rosa Rosal in Badjao.

As the village, Hassan meets and falls in love with a Muslim girl, Bala-ama (Rosa Rosal), niece of the Muslim chief. He asks for her hand in marriage. The chief tells him his wish will be granted if he becomes a Muslim and delivers a quantity of rare blue pearls to the tribe. Hassan complies with these requests, but his bride says she will never live with the Badjaos.

Hassan leaves his tribe to settle down in the Muslim village; his father disowns him. Hassan finds it difficult to adjust to the Muslims who consider the Badjao inferior. He begins to doubt the wisdom of his decision. Only his intense love for Bala-ama sustains him.

The Muslim chief asks for more of the blue pearls, but this time, Hassan refuses to give any. As a reprisal, the Muslim chief orders his men to set fire to Hassan's hut; they do this just as Bala-ama is about to give birth. Hassan rescues his wife and she has her baby. Knowing that the fire was deliberately started, Hassan confronts the Muslim chief. But despite his anger, he forgives the culprit, telling him that all men are equal, regardless of race or creed. Bala-ama then agrees to go with Hassan to rejoin the Badjao community.

The Badjaos receive the couple coldly. But Hassan proves himself by throwing his new-born son into the sea (according to an ancient belief, the baby is worthy to live if it survives this test). The baby is rescued by one of the Badjaos. Hassan is restored to his rightful place in the community, and his wife is accepted as a member of the clan.

Awards
Best Direction, Best Screenplay, Best Performance by an Actor and Best Black-and-White Cinematography, 1957 Asian Film Festival

Bernal's Films
1971 Pagging in Dulo 1 Dalisayon
1972 El Vitora
Inquisition
Till Death Do Us Part
1973 Now and Forever
Zoom, Zoom, Supremo 2
Si Popoyo atbp. 2
1974 Slepping Dragon
Pito ang Awa Ko
Mister Mo, Lover Boy Ko
1975 Scotch on the Rocks to Remember,
Black Coffee to Forget 3
Langmagi, Lamang ang Utang
1976 Ligan na Bulakan
Nanay sa Tagay
Babang Hwakay sa Awa 4
1977 Tinoy
Dulawang Pugad, Isang Ibon
Lahing Pilipino 3
Walang Kapatagan Tag-Awat
1978 Lagi na Lamang na Akong Babae!
Isang Gabi sa Eto, Isang Gabi sa Akin
Daw ay Akin
1979 Menor de Edad
Boy Kodyak
Boy May Pagbig Pag 3
Sulawan
1980 Good Morning, Sunshine
Gigidamsa 5
Sugar sa Ugnay
City of Darkness 1
1981 Bilbol Boys 5
Pahing 5
1982 Ito Ba ang Ating Mga Anak? 2
Galawung
Relayong 5
Himig Kits Maimut
Himala
1 Story, screenplay and direction by Bernal
2 One episode in an omnibus film
3 Not released in the Philippines
4 Partially directed; completed by another director
5 One episode in an unrelated historical epic produced by a government agency.
6 Bernal co-authored the screenplay.

Ishmael Bernal

Among the active Filipino film directors, Ishmael Bernal has been one of the most accomplished artists in terms of both quality and quantity of output. Essentially, his 11-year career in the movies has been characterized by attempts to rise above the Filipino movie industry's dismal conditions, raise the level of his audience, and meet halfway the commercialistic demands of the industry. His academic background includes an A.B. English degree from the University of the Philippines and postgraduate studies in French literature and a French government scholarship at the University of Aix-en-Provence.

Before joining the movies, he studied the technical and theoretical aspects of films at the reputable Film Institute of Poona, India, as a Colombo Plan scholar. Like the other Filipino film students abroad, he came back to the Filipi- tones only to realize that the local film industry was as underdeveloped (or developing) as the country. For here, the conditions have been so difficult that they mitigate against the creation of high-quality Filipino films. That a few good ones, some of them even excellent, have been made despite the almost impossible conditions, speaks well of the movie people.

But they are few. Only about four or six of 150 films made here every year may be considered truly good. Some
The richness of his films is how they grow on the moviegoer the second or third time he watches them. Whether or not the viewer agrees with what the film is saying, or whether or not he really likes the particular Bernal film he is watching, he will most likely be seldom bored by it, provided he switches his critical faculties on.

Bernal has departed from local movie conventions and turned standard fare into exciting experiments, as in his peculiar staging of dramatic confrontation scenes and physical romance. He gives new insights, even to over-used dramatic conflicts which are the staples of Philippine movies like love triangles and the plight of prostitutes. A genuine artist, Bernal explores the complex psyche of an individual human being and probes the dynamics of this individual’s inter-relationships with other persons and his part in the social and environmental set-up. In his most serious films, mainly Pagdating sa Dulo, Nunal sa Tubig, and City after Dark, his characters are forever grappling with debumanning, degrading forces around them and looking for meaningful relationships with others. He is in his best element in contemporary urban dramas, the reason why such films set in rural areas as Sugat sa Ugat (1980), Himala and even Nunal sa Tubig appear to be digressions from his usual style.

An actor’s director, Bernal has succeeded in drawing out the best from his actors. He has masterfully handled superb large crowd scenes, as in Ligaw na Bulakhak and Himala, using stars as well known or little-known professionals in small parts or non-speaking roles like as a film artist, generally have a simple, subdued, cool and detached quality. He expresses his ideas and composes his shots carefully, directly, economically and meaningfully. One can see the influence of the French Bresson and the Japanese Ozu in the composition of his shots. He is selective and sparing with his use of sounds, musical scoring in rarely intrusive and dialogue is generally terse and conversational.

Depending on the kind of film he is making, the rhythm is either snappy and rapid, as in the comedies Tisoy (1976), Saluwahan (1979) and Menor de Edad (1979), or the action drama Bibilbib Boys (1981); or brooding and contemplative, as in Boy Kodyak (1979), Girlfriend (1980) and Sugat sa Ugat. Himala marks another departure in his style that in the whole film is quiet and menacing, like Nunal sa Tubig, but explodes into a mayhem of sights and sounds in the stunning climax.

Every aspect of a Bernal film may not always be successfully realized, but this weakness is outdone by his strengths. In every film, he seems to be ready to try something new, whether it be a theme, conflict, character or scene. He is also one of the few major local directors to have covered the broadest range of film genres and themes with varying levels of success, from the historical drama, like the Bonifacio episode in the unreleased multi-million peso omnibus Lahing Pilipino (1976), to the disco musical Good Morning, Sunshine (1980) and the personal, experimental films Nunal sa Tubig and Himala.

— Mario A. Hernando

---

**Nunal sa Tubig**

Speck in the Water

**Une Tache sur l’Eau**

1976

Direction: Ishmael Bernal; Story and Screenplay: Jorge Aragó; Cinematography: Arnold Alvaro; Production Design: Betty Gostengfiao; Editing: Augusto Salvador; Sound: Godofredo de Leon; Music: The Vanishing Tribe. Produced by Seven Stars Production.

**Cast**

Elizabeth Orospe (Maria), George Estregan (Benjamin), Daria Ramirez (Chedeng), Ella Luamng (Maria’s aunt), Rustica Capio (Chedeng’s mother), Nenita Jana (Benjamin’s mother), Ruben Rustia (Maria’s father), Lem Garcia (Maria’s younger brother), Letizia de Guzman (Maria’s mother).

**Synopsis**

The film is about life on a small, remote fishing island that is slowly being sentenced to death by the process of modernization. The three main protagonists — Maria, Benjamin and Chedeng — who make up the film’s love triangle seem like everyone else in the village to be lifeless creatures waiting for some miracle to rouse them.

The story begins with the drowning of Chedeng’s father, a fisherman. His death puts the burden on his widow, a traditional midwife, and Chedeng, who is training to be a midwife at the town parochial center.

Maria’s family lives next door to Chedeng. The father is the caretaker of several fishponds belonging to a rich family from the city.

Benjamin, another neighbor, owns a motorized boat which serves as a passenger ferry between the
Relasyon
The Affair
1982
Color, English subtitles
Direction, Ishmael Bernal; Screenplay, Ricardo Lee, Raquel Villavicencio, Ishmael Bernal; Production design, Jenie de Guzman; Cinematography, Sergio Lobos; Editing, Augusto Salvador; Music, Winston Raval; Sound, Vic Macanay. Produced by Regal Films Inc.

Cast
Vilma Santos (Marilou), Kristofer deLeon (Emil), Emi Melen-drez (Junjun), Bing Caballero, Olivia Madrilejos, Beth Mondragon (Marilou’s friends)

Synopsis
Emil, a young college instructor, and Marilou, a planetarium guide, decide one day to live together. Emil has a wife, Dorothy, but they are temporarily separated. Marilou and Emil remodel an old house given to Emil by his relatives, and they begin to settle down.

Emil’s real character surfaces after the initial pre-occupations of building a home have become routine. Emil starts to notice the dominating male chauvinist, who is quite childish. He gives rules about how things must be run around the house and how Marilou must behave when they are not together. She must not go out with her male friends or entertain them, and she must be home by the time Emil comes home from work.

Benjie, Emil’s son by his wife Dorothy, becomes a regular visitor in Marilou’s house. After a difficult adjustment period, Benjie and Mari- lou become friends.

Marilou becomes too domesticated for Emil, and their excitement has gone out of their affair. Marilou becomes increasingly dissatisfied as, more and more, Emil takes her for granted.

Marilou’s friends give her all sorts of advice. Leave him, says one. Bear with him, says another. Make him feel insecure, get a lover. Mariket, one of her friends invites her to leave for America. Mariket has a new boyfriend who is taking her there, a gay American.

Marilou decides to go back to her parents. After a while, however, she misses Emil and arranges to see him again. She learns that Emil’s wife has come back and Emil feels he should keep his family together. She is amenable to an arrangement whereby Emil spends three nights of the week with her. She goes back to their house and adjusts to the life of a kept woman.

During one of these visits, Emil has a stroke and he is taken to a hospital by Marilou. She calls his wife who, very simply, takes over. Emil is diagnosed to have a brain aneurysm.

One weekend, at Marilou’s place, Emil has another stroke, this time, fatal. After the funeral, Emil’s wife retrieves all of Emil’s belongings from Marilou, including pieces of jewelry that were his gifts to his mistress. Only a picture of Emil is left with her.

She decides to go to the United States to start anew.

Aliw
Pleasure
Philsis
1980
Color, English and French subtitles
Direction, Ishmael Bernal; Screenplay, Franklin Cabaluna and Ishmael Bernal; Cinematography, Sergio Lobos; Production Design, Noel Mailonga; Music, George Canseco; Editing, Ike Jarlego, Jr.; Sound, Rolly Ruta. Produced by Seven-Stars Production

Cast
Lorna Tolentino, Amy Austria, Suzette Ranillo, Butch Aquino, Antonette Bas, Alma Bonnete, Rustica Carpio, Menggie Cobarrubias, Laura Danao, George Estregan, Edmund Farolan, Junjo Inocian, Dick Israel, Ramon Recto, Ruthie Roces, Juan Rodrigo, Jojo Santiago, Cesar "Yay" Topacio.

Synopsis
Aliw focuses on three young hospitality girls in a Roxas Boule-vard nightclub.

Girl number one is Amy Austria, a tough no-nonsense girl who is constantly forced to choose between the heart and the head. She earns $100 for servicing a Japanese customer (729 pesos according to her conversion rate, plus tax and service charge.) She also sells P5 goods to fellow bargains on the installment plan.

She meets a married man who immediately gives her the usual routine - apartment, car, etc. She is not in love with this man, but instead is in love with a poor puppy-dog lover, a struggling singer who, when her married lover finds out about her affair-on-the-side, he beats her up and Amy leaves him. Amy searches for her puppy dog lover, but realizing that his income isn’t substantial enough to buy her two dresses, she turns her back on him and goes back where she is happiest: in the nightclub.

Girl number two is Suzette Ranillo. She works in the club to support a delinquent younger brother and a gossip-mongering mother. Amy Austria has a baby by a married man who keeps on stalling about their living in to- gether. Like many girls of her kind, she keeps on ignoring a neighborhood suitor because of the skimpiness of his finance. In the end, the baby of Amy leaves her and her neighborhood suitor marries somebody else. Suzette goes back to the nightclub to drown her sorrows in drink.

Lorna Tolentino is girl number three. She is a young woman in a club but already with a mind of her own. She is tough and cynical and cannot be tied down by other people’s rules and regulations on how to conduct her life. She carries on with a combo player in the nightclub - a definite nothing - and even supports him. When he becomes too possessive and demanding, she leaves him, opting for her freedom. She then shacks up with a businessman who gives her a house but who tells her she must never go to his office, must never call up his wife, must never see people in the house. Sensing she is caged again, Lorna runs away from him and goes back to the club.

Maria’s family is having trouble making ends meet. Her mother is forced to close down their little village store because no one is buying. With her only wealth, a diamond ring inherited from her parents, she purchases Benjamin’s idle boat motor to fit on their own boat, so her husband and sons can take over the passenger ferry service.

Maria, meanwhile, shyly makes friends with Benjamin’s mother, who earns a living by embroidering piece goods for a dealer in town. The older woman teaches her the craft.

Chedeng finds it to return to the island because her mother gets sick and has become too weak to stay by herself. Chedeng takes over her mother’s practice.

When the time comes for Maria to give birth, it is Chedeng who assists. It is a difficult labor; in the act of extricating the baby, Chedeng wrenches off the head. She runs off tremently, not knowing how much she was to blame in the fatal accident, whether she had unconsciously willed it.

Her baby’s death is a trauma for Maria who goes into a catatonic state. Shortly thereafter, Benjamin returns to the island. When he learns what has happened to Maria, he claims her and brings her home.

Chedeng leaves the island once more, and Maria’s brothers embark on their new livelihood.

Awards
Best Picture, 1976 Catholic Mass Media Awards

One of the Seven Best Filipino Films of the Seventies, selected by the Manunuri ng Pelikano, Filipino (local film critics’ association)

Amy Austria, Suzette Ranillo and Lorna Tolentino in Aliw.
Himala
1982
Color, English subtitles

Direction, Ishmael Bernal; Screenplay, Ricardo Lee; Cinematography, Sergio Lobao; Production Design, Raquel Villavicencio; Music, Winston Raval; Editing, Ike Jarlego Jr.; Sound, Vic Macanay. Produced by Experimental Cinema of the Philippines.

Cast
Nora Aunor (Elsa), Spandy Manikan (Orly), Gigi Dueñas (Nimia), Laura Centeno (Chayong), Veronicca Paileo (Mrs. Alba), Pen Medina (Pilo), Vangie Labalan (Elsa’s mother), Amable Quiumbao (Sepa), Ben Almeda (Baldo)

Synopsis
Elsa, a 22-year-old peasant girl who helps out at the house of the village’s richest woman, seen a vision of the Virgin Mary on a hill outside the village after a solar eclipse. She tells her foster-mother, who disbelieves her and calls in the local shaman to exorcise her of any evil spirits. The local priest likewise disbelieves Elsa but she insists she is telling the truth.

Word spreads around about her visions (she apparently has subsequent “sessions” with the Virgin), and the villagers are in the vanguard of believers. For this village is very poor and is suffering from a long drought; it believes itself cursed. The village folk flock to Elsa to be healed of their physical ailments and deformities. Elsa gains nationwide fame for her visions and her healing sessions; truckloads of pilgrims and curiosity seekers descend on the village.

Elsa herself is taken in hand by her erstwhile mistress, Mrs. Alba, who recruits Elsa’s mother, her close friend Chayong, and other believers into the Siete Apóstoles (seven apostles). They stage-manage Elsa’s public appearances and handle her local publicity and public relations. Mrs. Alba hits upon the bright idea of bottling water that has been “blessed” by Elsa and selling this to the pilgrims. Already, the village has been taken over by a business boom—plaster statues, prayer cards, T-shirts and other promotional gimmicks featuring Elsa and her visions are peddled, along with the other commodities and services that cater to tourists.

Among the people who arrive is Nimia, who was Elsa’s schoolmate and close friend. Coming from Manila where she has survived as a bar-girl and prostitute, she decides it will be good business to put up a cabaret in the village.

Another visitor is Orly, a filmmaker who intends to document the Elsa phenomenon on film to sell to a producer or to television. He interviews Chayong and Nimia, among others, for background on Elsa.

One day, Elsa appears to the waiting crowds for the usual healing session but she looks distraught, and in fact, begs off for the day. It turns out that a misfortune has befallen Elsa and Chayong. Orly, confessing to the local priest, discloses that in the course of dogging Elsa, he chanced upon a shocking sight: Elsa and Chayong, who had gone to the hill for prayers, were attacked there by two visiting youths (who appeared to be high on drugs) and mercilessly raped. After the incident, the two girls had explained their battered looks by saying that during prayers, they were attacked by the devil masquerading as a wild boar.

Meanwhile, Chayong hangs herself apparently because she cannot live with the fact of having been raped, and also because her boyfriend Pilo has decided to leave her in order to seek his fortune in Saudi Arabia. The rape obviously put Elsa into a dilemma. What was the use of her “visions” if she could be so defenseless when attacked? Around this time, the two sons of Sepa, one of her apostles, fall sick from eating spoiled leftovers. Elsa is unable to help them and they die. Other children in the village also die; apparently, it is a cholera epidemic.

Elsa is discredited in the eyes of everyone, and the angry, mourning village is abandoned by the visitors.

One day, the word spreads around that Elsa is pregnant; the local midwife has confirmed it.

At the same time, it suddenly rains. The villagers, desperate for miracles, proclaim that this is one, and they all triumphantly proceed to Elsa’s house, saying her powers have obviously returned. Even her pregnancy is interpreted as a sign of grace, as an “immaculate conception.” The villagers celebrate the miracle in a candlelit procession to the “hill of visions.”

News spreads once more about Elsa’s powers, and again, the people start streaming into the village. Elsa announces she has something important to say. On the appointed day, thousands come to the hillside. She tells them very simply that no miracles have happened, that her pregnancy owed nothing to miraculous causes, that people make their own miracles just as they create their own curses.

Someone in the crowd points a gun at Elsa and kills her with one shot. After the initial panic, the crowd re-groups and the bloody corpse of Elsa is borne down the hill on the shoulders of her believers, who are rallied by Sepa to take up Elsa’s cause. A new cult is born.

Awards and Recognition
Best Picture, Best Direction, Best Story, Best Cinematography, Best Production Design, Best Editing, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actress, Best Supporting Actor, 1982 Metro Manila Film Festival Opening Film, 1983 Manila International Film Festival

Personally selected by Festival Director Moritz de Hadeln as the Philippine competition entry, 1983 Berlin International Film Festival

* Himala — Pilipino for “miracle.”
Lino Brocka

Lino Brocka was born in San Jose, Nueva Ecija, on April 3, 1940. As a child, he was an avid movie fan, devouring almost all of the local and foreign films that came to his hometown. In the late sixties, after liberal arts schooling at the University of the Philippines, he became a Mormon missionary and was stationed in the Molokai leper colony. It was a spiritual journey which was to end in a “burnt-out case”. After Molokai, he stayed awhile in San Francisco, California and watched more films.

He returned to the Philippines and worked on Monte Hellman’s Flight to Fury with Jack Nicholson. He joined the Philippine Educational Theater Association, of which he was to become the director-general after the declaration of martial law. He scripted and directed teleplays for a drama anthology, Balintatawa, wherein he made good use of talented but forgotten old actors.

In 1970, he directed his first film, Wanted: Perfect Mother, followed by Santiago and Tubog sa Ginto for LEA Productions. In these early films, we already begin to see the characteristics of the Brocka style—plots that are not above the grasp of the common tao but renovated to incalucate a deeper understanding of the human condition. He consistently elicits well-rounded performances from his actors, giving them a major role in the development of the movie.

Disgusted with the narrow-minded mentalities that dominated Philippine film-making, he left cinema in 1972 but returned in 1974 with CineManila, a production company he formed with his friends. He directed Timbang Ka Ngunit Kulang (You are Weighed in the Balance but are Found Wanting, 1974), a film on the hypocrisy of a small town which was cheered as an artistically daring motion picture in the then wasteland of Philippine movies.

In 1975, he directed Maynila Sa Kuko ng Liwanag (Manda in the Claws of Neon), considered the most important Filipino film of the seventies. It deals with human lives caught in the drift from province to city and ending up as social outcasts.

In 1977, Brocka’s Insang was presented at the Directors’ Fortnight in Cannes. This was followed by Jaguar in the 1980 official Cannes competition and by Bona in the 1981 Directors’ Fortnight. Brocka’s films have served to introduce Philippine cinema in the international movie scene.

At present, Lino is the energetic president of the Kapusan ng mga Direktor ng Pelikulang Pilipino (the local film directors’ guild), as well as staying on with PETA as Director-General. He continues indefatigably to direct stage plays and television shows as well as five or six movies a year.

— Agustin V. Sotto

Brocka’s Films

1970
Wanted: Perfect Mother
Santiago
Tubog sa Ginto

1971
Standroom
Lumot na Pati mga Anghel
Cadena de Amor

1972
Villa Maria
Noa
Cherry Blossoms

1974
Timbang Ka Ngunit Kulang
Tabo, Dalawa, Isa

1975
Maynila: Sa Kuko ng Liwanag
Dangdaw

1976
Lunes, Martes, Miyerkoles, Huwebes,
Biyernes, Sabado, Linggo
Insang

1977
Tahan na Emposs, Tahan
Lahing Pilipino

1978
Gumising Ka, Manja
In this Corner?
Haya sa Hayop
Init
Rusta Services

1979
Basa

1980
Nakita sa Pag-ibig
Angela Mackado
Bona

1981
Kontrobersyal
Borgsi
Hello, Young Lovens
Rinasa si Miste, Dapa sa Minis
Caught in the Act
Paipat-tpat, Papant-papant

1982
Mother Dear
Cain at Abel

1983
Experiences
Strangers in Paradise

1
Unreleased
2
Released in 1982
3
Unreleased as of January

Tubog sa Ginto
1971

Color, no subtitles

Direction, Lino Brocka; Screenplay, Lino Brocka; Cinematography, Steve Perez; Music, Doming Valdez.

Cast

Synopsis
Based on a controversial novel serialized in a comic magazine, it tells the story of an upper-class family, focusing on the sexual awakening of the boy, an only child. His idealized image of his family is shattered when he learns about his mother’s illicit love affair with a mysterious man and his father’s homosexual relationship with the family driver. The father eventually commits suicide, and the boy finds comfort only in the arms of his loyal girlfriend.

Awards
Best Direction, 1971 FAMAS Awards.
New directors were tried out. And a new breed of actors and actresses, who were willing to do anything in front of the camera, threatened to put the more established crowd-drawers out of business. Sex became the staple of the film industry.

It was during this time that a new film director surfaced — Celso Ad. Castillo, then in his twenties. His vehicle, *Nymphe*, was the simple story of a girl from a very religious family who ran away and got involved with four men. This story has been done over and over again in a number of forgettable movies and is a staple of the comic magazines. In its attempt to ride the *bomba* bandwagon, it featured enough sex scenes to satisfy the male audiences who expected every new movie to be still more daring. But Castillo had more to offer than steamy sex. He told his story in such a way that details previously considered taboo were exploited. In one of the first scenes, *Nymphe*, the cooped-up virgin, is shown praying with her spinster aunt, when her attention is caught by the illicit coupling between two young lovers just outside their window. The scene of the novena is intercut with the gossipping and moaning couple. At the end of the novena (coinciding with the consummation of the sexual act), the image of Christ is shown staring down at her, reprimanding her for her sin. The movie ends with an abortion scene shown in all its gory details, a literal bloodbath which causes the death of the girl.

In a strictly Catholic society like the Filipinos, a film like *Nymphe* was bound to create a sensation. It was, for the younger generation of Filipinos who missed the so-called Golden Age of Philippine movies in the 50s, their first auteur film. Castillo showed a flair for visual narrative, emphasis and texture never before seen on screen. But it was something Filipinos were quite familiar with from decades of comic book illustrations. Castillo himself was aware of that.

He had started as a writer for a comic magazine. Later on, he published his own magazine, in which he wrote all the stories — “from cover to cover” — using all his relatives’ names as authors. He even had to peddle the magazine himself. A bad deal with an unscrupulous distributor caused his publication to close shop.

His father, however, knew an independent producer who made low-budget films. Castillo was asked to write a script for a comedian who wanted to make a solo film. He created *James Bondang* after Britain’s superspy. It was followed by *Dr. Yes*. The films made money and a producer invested in a film for him to write and direct.*Miyoing Mapangatubig*, an action movie made in 1966. He was 23 years old.

*Nymphe* was his eighth film, followed by *The Virgin*, the story of a Southern Tagalog lass who is kidnapped and raped by bandits. It turns out, in the end, that the girl personified an image of the Virgin Mary in the village church. These last two films established Castillo’s name in the minds of the mass audience. In the next 10 years, he made more than 20 films covering all possible film genres in the country: musical comedy, horror and suspense, action, slapstick drama, love stories (one with incest as subject), fantasy/ folklore and kung fu. It is a feat that remains unequalled by any
of his contemporaries.

The most memorable of the earlier films is *Asedillo*, about a Southern Tagalog rebel in the 1920's, a la Elia Kazan's *A Face in the Crowd*. It starred Fernando Poe Jr., the King of the Philippine Movies, who, in the early 70's (a time of rising political and social awareness among the youth) was desperate for a new and relevant image. With this film, Castillo started a series of films with Poe, casting him as a Joaquin-tinished blind fighter in *Esteban* and a legendary gun-slinger in *Alamat*. *Ang Alamat* is the story of a soldier who has just returned from fighting in Huk (anti-government guerrillas) in the 50's and is determined that he has fought his last battle. But his hometown is besieged by the private army of an hacendado who claims all the land around his hacienda. The reluctant hero has to fight for his townfolk, so he earns his buried legendary .45 caliber pistol and attacks the hacienda alone. This film, told with Castillo's comic book-inspired flair for visual impact and emphatic style, showed the quintessential Poe. When Poe subsequently directed his own films, he did not forget the lessons learned from Cas-

![Image](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

The ordinary film viewer's visual taste, according to Castillo, is dictated by the comic books. He believes, therefore, that a film director who can translate the visual effectiveness of comic illustrations to the screen can never fail to communicate with the Filipino audience.

Pedro Penduko is a character out of our folklore, further popularized in the pages of a comic magazine in the 50's. It was also made into a film then. Castillo did a remake of it in 1974. It dealt with mermaids and fairies, ghosts and monsters, and a town fool as hero. To make the fantasy scenes credible (it was a time when fantasies were avoided, even in the movies!) he had to make the mermaids and the fairies appear only when Pedro Penduko was drunk. It was set in an island with white sand beaches -- a setting Castillo has used over and over again in subsequent films.

Particularly, in *Pinakamagandang Hayop sa Bayan* starring Gloria Diaz, our first Miss Universe. Castillo stripped her of cloak and crown, dressed her in revealing wet cotton dress, and made her materialize on an island populated with sex-starved men and pious women, to be desecrated by the mob. He made this film after martial law was declared in the Philippines, and nudity and explicit sex were censored by the administration. It was a protest against the *bomba* films by religious civic groups. Castillo, in an attempt to get around the nudity ban, started a trend in Philippine movies popularly known as the wet look. Castillo's films are peppered with themes and subjects he had hinted at in his *bomba* films: hypocrisy, idolatry and religious fanaticism.

It was in 1977 with an exceptional film, *Burlesk Queen*, that Castillo got his first critical recognition. Entered in that year's Metro Manila Film Festival, it was adjudged the Best Picture, won him a Best Director Award as well as nine other artistic awards. It told of a young girl in Manila in the 50's who wanted to become a burlesque dancer. It showed a subdued Castillo. He seemed in this film, to have held back his passion for visual impact to give way to his new mastery of film grammar. His characters cried and whimpered, they did not scream and curse. They delivered dissertations on

---

**Pagputi ng Uwak, Pag-ilmig ng Tagak**

When the Crow Turns White
Quand les Corbeaux Seront Blancs
1978

**Color, English and French subtitles**

Direction: Celso Ad. Castillo; Screenplay, Celso Ad. Castillo; Isko Lopez, Landor Perez Jacob; and Ruben Arthur Nicdao; Camera: Rommel Vitug; Production Design: Peter Perlas; Music: George Canseco. Produced by VS Films.

Cast:
Vilma Santos (Julie Monserrat), Bembol Roco (Dido Ventura), Joonee Gamboa (Julie Roque), Lito Avasures (Kumander Salome), Adolfo Lumasarte, (Fisherman), Angie Ferro (Miguela)

**Synopsis**

It is the 1950's, at the height of the Huk (local Communist armed forces) movement, in a part of the country beset with agrarian unrest.

During the town fiesta of Santa Ines, Julie Monserrat is introduced to Dido Ventura and Maestro Juan Roque, an old musician. Julie, an orphan who comes from the local aristocracy, is on vacation from school in Manila, and is staying with her two spinster aunts Beatriz and Miguela.

Dido Ventura, a young man from a poor family, lives with his mother and an old grieved wife against the Monserrat; she believes they grabbed the Ventura property.

Maestro Juan Roque, a well-known composer and violinist, has just returned to Santa Ines to finish a zarzuela he has been planning for a long time.

Dido falls in love with Julie at their first meeting. One night, he sneaks into the spinster’s house and plays an impromptu night with Julie. The brief liaison leads to their elopement.

When the two lovers return to ask for the aunts' blessing, Julie is made to choose between a life of poverty and uncertainty with Dido, or a life of comfort and security with her aunts. Julie chooses to stay with her aunts. Dido is shaken by the turn of events. He meets Crissy, his girl friend, who insists him for the embarrassing situation he has gotten himself into. Dido turns roughly against the girl and beats her up. Crissy’s brother finds out about the situation and challenges him to a fistfight. Dido kills Crissy’s brother. Crissy’s father, who is the town mayor, decides to dispose of Dido immediately. But when his secret police nab Dido one night, the jeep taking them to Dido’s execution is ambushed by a band of Huk rebels led by Kumander Salome, Dido’s uncle, Saved. Dido decides to join his rebel uncle in the mountains.

Meanwhile, Maestro Roque, on a visit to the spinster’s old house to talk about Julie’s violin lessons, finds out that Julie is actually his own daughter by one of the Monserrat sisters now deceased. Julie herself is pregnant with Dido’s child. The old musician’s visit serves as the ensuing revelation make her decide to keep the baby.

Maestro Roque arranges for Julie and the child to go to the mountains. On the night of Good Friday, Dido leaves the rebel camp to see his newborn child, and the child is stolen by the bandits to go along with the young man.

Government spies learn of this and an ambush is set for Dido and Julie and the only survivor and witness of the massacre that ends the film.

**Awards**

Best Feature: 1978 Urutan Awards
Best Director: 1978 Metro Manila Film Festival
Best Musical Scoring: 1978 FAMAS Awards

---

*Art, not imprecations of wrath, which had set the pitch of his previous films.*

The critics fought bitterly over *Burlesk Queen.* In that festival, he was contending with film makers who enjoyed a high reputation among the country's most avid film critics. Upon winning the award, Castillo instantly became the favorite beating boy of the critics who did not appreciate *Burlesk Queen.*

To prove to them his worth, Castillo did *Pagputi ng Uwak*, a 50's epic set in his favorite Southern Tagalog locale. It was the most lavish of all his productions and had all the elements for a "great" Filipino film. He exploited the many religious and social rituals typical of the region. The film fea-

![Image](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

It was followed by *Julian Mabuhay*, the story of an agrarian reformist turned rebel in the 50's and 60's. Again with Romy Vitug as cinematographer, Castillo refrained from his usual comic-book visuals and attempted to trans-

![Image](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

Four other films followed: *Totoy Buong*, a story involving a father-and-son team of dancers in the 50's heyday of balroom dancing in Manila (Castillo's answer to the populari-

![Image](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

In just a decade, Castillo, with all his audacity and dramatic excesses, has claimed his place as one of the most ver-

![Image](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

---

*Jasmin Dutro de la Cruz*
at the Savoy vaudeville. The shooting of the picture was completed but the corporation met with difficulties. The picture was never released. Sofia sailed back to Jolo.

When Sofia Lotta returned to Manila, she made the picture *Ang Lumang Simbahan* with Gregorio Fernandez. Mary Walter, a 15-year-old beauty, made her debut in the film financed by Vicente Albo and produced at Malayan Movies studio in San Juan del Monte. The story was based on the classic Tagalog poem of Florentino Collantes. Before each screening at the Tivoli in 1928, Collantes would appear on stage and recite the poem.

When Jose Nepomuceno was scouting around for new talent in 1929, Fernandez offered to fetch a nephew from Lubao. Teenaged Regidor de la Rosa immediately appealed to Nepomuceno who paired him with an American mestiza, Rose Stagner, in the silent flicker *Ligaw na Bulakla*. Nepomuceno baptized them Rogelio de la Rosa and Rosa del Rosario. He did not realize then that he was launching the future king and queen of Philippine movies.

Gregorio Fernandez played the role of a “moony collegian” in Araw Movies’ *Colegian Love*, an attempt to produce a talking picture by synchronizing phonograph sound with film. Fernandez was dressed like a dandy in striped blazer, a hanky sticking out of his breast pocket, striped tie and white trousers. On his head, he wore a white *buntal* hat with turned-down brim that was to be his trademark in films. His leading lady was Naty Fernandez (not related to him). Comic Canaplin and comedienne Patrocinio (Monang) Carvajal were also in the film, shown in 1930.


After Raful Fernandez had established Banahaw Corporation in 1930, he offered attractive salaries to the Nepomuceno stars, directors and crew. Eventually, he succeeded in pirating directors Carlos Vander Tolosa and Manuel Silos, stars Eduardo de Castro, Gregorio Fernandez and Mary Walter.

In Banahaw’s *Labi ng Lumang Libingan*, Gregorio Fernandez played the villain—a role he would play in many more films. The first talking picture in the Philippines came out in 1932. In the era of sound, Fernandez affiliated with Philippine films, his first talkie being *Taong Dementia*, starring Rosa del Rosario.

**Fernandez the Director**

At the age of 33 in 1937, “Yvonne” Fernandez ventured into directing his first film, *Asahat at Kabahong*, starring Purita Santamaria, for Philippine Films. He freelanced as director.

For X-Onic Films, he made *Tatlong Pagkabihin* in 1938; for Excelsior, he directed *Cela at Balatid* starring Jose Padilla Jr. and his sister, Maria Clara Ruiz. For Sampaguita, he made one of the smash musical hits of that era, *Siling* (1959), with the popular tandem of Rogelio de la Rosa and Carmen Rosales. It was screened in February 1942 at Life
Theater in Quiapo, Manila, after the outbreak of war. Philippine movie-making ground to a stop during wartime. Former film stars and directors took to the stage in Manila and the provinces. In 1945, Fernandez was directing a war drama at Lotus Theater on Rizal Avenue, Manila, entitled *Garrison 13*. The cast included pre-war stars Rogelio de la Rosa, Norma Bacalantar, Jaime de la Rosa (Rogelio’s younger brother) and Linda Estrella. Efren Reyes, his brother Johnny, and Tony Santos played soldiers.

LVN producer Narcisa de Leon, who had released the first post-war Tagalog film, Oroang Ginto, signed up the entire troupe, including Fernandez’s assistant, Armando Gaczes, to make a film out of the play. Only the leading lady was replaced, by Mila del Sol, who had starred in LVN’s first picture, *Gitico Ko*, in 1939.

*Garrison 13* netted P145,000 at the Dalnyai Theater in 1946. Doña Sisang distributed bonuses to the film’s cast and crew. From then on, Gregorio Fernandez was established as an LVN director.

Among Fernandez’s early hits were *P1,000 Kagogulasan* (Rogelio de la Rosa, Norma Bacallaflo) and *Puting Banyayog* (Leopoldo Salcedo, Norma Bacallaflo) and Armando Goyena in his film debut in 1948. In Capas (1949), Leopoldo Salcedo played the role of a soldier forced into the death march to the concentration camp at Capas, Tarlac; Celia Flor was his leading lady. The director himself had a part in the film as an old man in the rayadillo uniform of a 19th-century Filipino revolutionary.

Fernandez followed up with the film *Gregorio de Pilar* (Jose Paulino, Tessie Quintana) in 1949. In 1951, Yoyong directed *Dugo sa Dugo* (Lilia Dizon, Mario Montenegro) and another hit, the costume film *Bohemyo* (Della Razon, Mario Montenegro).

Fernandez directed the first Filipino co-production with a foreign film company, Persari Productions of Indonesia. This was the color film *Rodrigo de Villa* in 1952 starring Delia Razon and Mario Montenegro in Tagalog. Persari’s version was dubbed in Bahasa Indonesia by Netti Herawati and other Indonesian stars.

The story of Yoyong directed *Philippine Navy* (Armando Goyena, Tessie Quintana), *Iktuwar* (Nida Blanca, Nestor de Villa) and *Dagohoy* (Tessie Quintana, Mario Montenegro). This is a holdefilm story before the war, *Prinsipe Takoso* (Dela Razon, Mario Montenegro), and Singing na Tanaso (Tessie Quintana, Nestor de Villa) followed in 1954.

Fernandez established a milestone for LVN in 1955. His picture *Higit sa Lahat* swept six FAMAS awards for best picture, director (Gregorio Fernandez), actor (Rogelio de la Rosa), editing (Enrique Jaljelo Jr.), sound (July Hidalgo) and story (Mario M. Lopez). Rogelio played a fugitive driven away from home and family by pride. In the Asian Film Festival of 1956, awards went to Fernandez as director and to Rogelio as actor. *Higit* was edged out as best picture by another excellent LVN vehicle, *Anak Dalita*.

Yoyong’s next picture was *Dalagang Tarsing* (Dela Razon, Nestor de Villa). His *Lakasang Tagumpay* was chosen by FAMAS as best picture in 1956, with another award to its cinematographer, Remigio Young.

**Malvarosa**

1959

**Black and white, English and French subtitles**

**Direction**, Dr. Gregorio Fernandez; **Screenplay**, Pablo S. Gomez; **Cinematography**, Mike Accion; **Art direction**, Teddy Carmoña; **Editing**, Enrique Jaljelo; **Music**, Francisco Buenacarino. Produced by LVN Pictures.

**Cast**

Charito Solis, Leroy Salvador, Carlos Padilla Jr., Eddie Rodriguez, Rebeca del Rio, Linda Rosas, Vic Silayam, Vic Diaz, Rey Ruiz, Johnny Reyes

**Synopsis**

The story revolves around the childhood of a drunkard and a mahjong-room habitue: Melanie, Alberto, Leonides, Vedasto, Avelino—the only girl, Rosa. (The initials of her brothers’ first names, M-A-L-A-V-A, and Rosa’s name, together make up the word Malvarosa, a flower symbolizing love and fortitude, the very qualities that characterize Rosa in the film.)

Their father’s sudden death causes the mother’s melancholia. Rosa has the option to marry her fiancé, but decides to stick it out with the family. More crises come about.

Alberto attempts rape on his beloved and is frustrated. Driven by shame and desperation, he commits suicide. Vedasto convinces Rosa to enter the employ of a wealthy man he barely knows. Rosa takes the job, and this causes conflict with her fiancé.

Meanwhile, Leonides has killed a man, and dies in the hands of pursuers lawmen. Hardly is this last crisis over when Rosa’s employer shows his true colors and tries to rape her. Happily, her fiancé arrives on the scene.

Vedasto, in an attempt to cover up his complicity in the matter, confesses Rosa for spending an illicit night with her fiancé. Rosa’s optimism dwindles. She attempts suicide, but Avelino and her fiancé arrive in the nick of time. Almost simultaneously, the mother has to be rescued. She has fainted while praying for Rosa (whom she had thought dead), and is imprisoned in a fire caused by a fallen candle.

The mother is rescued, Vedasto repents, and our characters resolve to struggle on.

**Awards**

Best Supporting Actress (Rebeca del Rio), 1959 Asian Film Festival directed by Manuel Silos, Lamberto Avellan, Gregorio Fernandez and Felicizing Constantino. *Gintong Pagpaparang* (Rogelio de la Rosa, Cecilia Lopez) was scripted by then Press Secretary J.V. Cruz. Fernandez’s 1957 films were *Hukom Rolaan* (Jaime de la Rosa, Emma Alegre) and *P10,000 Pagibig*, a take-off from a previous film, starring Charito Solis and Eddie Rodriguez.

In *Malvarosa* (1958), Charito Solis displays her dramatic capabilities under the direction of Fernandez. Rebeca del Rio won the Asian Film Festival supporting actress award that year for her performance in the film. The picture also got the International Prestige Award of Merit from FAMAS. Leroy Salvador was the male lead.

In 1959 Fernandez made *Ay Pepita!* (Mario Montenegro, Nita Javier, Luz Valdes), *Ana Maria* (Charito Solis, Eddie Rodriguez, Luz Valdes), *Casa Grande* with an all-star cast directed by Fernandez, Manuel Conde and Felicizing Constantino, and *Panaginip* (Mario Montenegro, Lita Gutierrez); in 1960, *Aust ng mga Dakta* (Lilia Dizon, Bernard Bonnin, Lourdes Medel, Mila Ocampo) and *Aust ng mga Magik* (Nestor de Villa, Charito Solis, Bernard Bonnin and Lourdes Medel).

In 1961, when LVN stopped production, Gregorio Fernandez likewise faded out from the movie scene, retiring to his home in San Juan.

By his wife, Pazi Padilla of the vast Padilla clan of Bulacan, he had seven children: Maria Luisa, Maria Paz, Maria Isabel, Jose, Maria Teresita, Emmanuel and Rodolfo. Two of the children, Merle and Rudy, have become movie stars.

Yoyong had left from his life as reduce to accept the Gantimpalang Gaumoyo (Mayor’s Award) as one of the 34 illustrous pioneers—living and dead—and of Philippine movies during the celebration of its golden anniversary on Manila’s foundation day June 24, 1967. Fernandez shared the stage with his former leading lady Mary Walter, directors Carlos Vander Tolosa, Manuel Silos and Gerardo de Leon, producer Aurelio Bocobo, and former Angat Navy Atang de la Rama, who starred in the first Filipino-made feature *Dalagang Bukid* of Jose Nepomuceno in 1929.

In the afternoon of his life, Yoyong Fernandez devoted his time to his favorite hobby of tending fighting cocks.

Gregorio Fernandez kept out of touch with his contemporaries and quietly passed away a few years ago. As an actor, he is remembered more as a meering villain than as the debonaire leading man with a buntal hat and a handkerchief in his coat pocket during the nascent days of Filipino silent films. As a director of the 1950s, Fernandez left his mark with films that effortlessly and effectively portrayed generous slices of Filipino life.

— Eric S. Giron
to teaching theater, film and television at the local De La Salle. He let his students do all the film work; yet he considered this the time that he learned a lot about film, teaching it, watching a lot of movies and talking about them. He also formed the Mascara Theater Ensemble which is still considered the most progressive drama group in Baguio, and generally, in central Philippines.

He would come back to Manila, once in a while, “to test the waters.” He did some one-shot shows, directed one PBA (Professional Basketball Association) season coverage for television, then back to Baguio. It was on one of these trips to Manila that he was offered to do production design work with Laila Lim Perez on Eddie Romero’s turn-of-the-century picaresque film, Ganito Kami Noon, Paano Kayo Ngayon?. This much-awarded film won for Perez and Gallaga the award for best production design from the 1976 Metro Manila Film Festival, and later an Urn award from the local critics’ circle. Gallaga’s stint with Ganito hooked him on to another aspect of film-making that interested him immensely.

With the full support of his wife, Madie, he came back to Manila, eight years after Binhi, perhaps for good. For one year, though, nobody wanted to “touch” him until TV host June Keithley asked him to direct The June and Johnny Show (Keithley’s co-host was John Litton, now the MIFF Festival Director-General). Moving around in TV and film circles, Gallaga eventually met up with film director Ishmael Bernal. He did production design work for several Bernal films, among them, the award-winning City after Dark (for which he won his second Urn critics’ award for production design), Girlfriend, Pabbling, Bibidh Boys and Ito Ba ang Ating Mga Anak? as well as Lino Brocka’s In this Corner, and a couple of Filipino-American co-productions. Working closely with the industry gave him an entirely new outlook on film and the business of film-making.

For more than two years, while he was doing this production work, he wrote and submitted several storylines for film to different producers, but without success. One of these stories was Oro, Plata, Mata, which became one of two stories chosen by the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines (ECP) in a nationwide contest for its first feature-film projects. ECP also awarded the direction to Gallaga, who, as story proponent and co-author, had proposed himself directly for the movie. (The other ECP production was Himala, the opening film of the 1983 MIFF, directed by Bernal).

Based on some of his own experiences and incidents from the Japanese Occupation recounted by his relatives and family friends, Oro is a film which, Gallaga says, he had already “made in his mind over and over” before it ever saw the gleam of light. A cinematic tour de force on a scale hardly ever attempted before in Philippine cinema, Gallaga’s solo directorial debut is one of two Philippine entries in the 1985 MIFF Competition.

Oro, Plata, Mata is a film that not only reflects the effects of war on people’s lives; it reflects the mind and heart of a filmmaker who, after a long period of frustrated dreams has his long nurtured and worked for.

---

Philippine Official Entry 1983 MIFF Competition

Oro, Plata, Mata
1982

Color, English subtitles

Direction, Peque Gallaga; Screenplay, Jose Javier Reyes; Cinematography, Rocky Lapat; Production Design, Don Escudero and Rodell Cruz; Music, Jose Gentica; Editing, Jesus Navarro; Sound, Ramon Reyes. Produced by Experimental Cinema of the Philippines.

Cast
Manny Ojeda (Don Claudio Ojeda), Liza Lorena (Nena Ojeda), Sandy Andokong (Maggie Ojeda), Cherie Gil (Trining Ojeda), Fides Cuyugan Acsenio (Inday Lorenzo), Joel Torre (Miguel Lorenzo), Maya Valdez (Jo Russell), Leel Villanueva (Viring Ravilo), Ronnie Lazaro (Hermes Mercurio), Abbo de la Cruz (Medico) and Mely Mallari (Extra). Agustin Gata (Lucio)

Synopsis
The film traces the decade of two aristocratic families driven to a jungle refuge during the Second World War. In a city south of Luzon, just before the outbreak of the Pacific War, Nena Ojeda, her family and friends are celebrating the debut of her older daughter, Maggie. In the garden, Maggie’s younger sister Trining is getting her first kiss from her childhood sweetheart, Miguel Lorenzo. Miguel, an astronomy buff on the verge of manhood, is the son of...
Miguel, who freeze in action when a Japanese soldier comes upon the girls bathing in the nearby river. Hermes kills the Jap, tearing his victim’s jaw apart to avenge his own misfortune at the hands of the Japanese. This time, it is Maggie’s turn to console Miguel. Later, Miguel takes lessons from Tiritin in how to handle and shoot a gun.

One day, Melchor the foreman steals a group of Viring’s jewels, saying it was his due for all the services he has rendered. Melchor is driven away, but he vainly tries to persuade the other man-servants to join him. Lucio and the rest refuse. Not much later, Melchor joins a bandit gang and comes back for a vengeful raid. They murder the remaining helpers, including Lucio and his mother, Melchor’s wife. Indy is brutally raped, Viring’s finger is cut off when she refuses to part with a ring, and the food supplies are taken away by Melchor’s band. Tiritin also leaves with the bandits, obediently of her own free will.

A bond of love and understand-ing has developed between Maggie and Miguel. The latter, now more man than boy, takes it upon himself to rescue the older women from their trauma by prod- ducing them to resume their mahjong sessions; his prescription works. Afterwards, he leaves with Hermes to hunt down the bandits and to recover Tiritin. The two find the bandits’ lair and take the enemy by surprise, killing everyone in sight. Miguel’s new-found bravery erupts into ruthless savagery. An epilogue follows this bloody climax. The time is shortly after the so-called Liberation, when the Americans have finally driven out the Japanese. Again, a party is being held at the Ojeda residence, this time announcing the betrothal of Miguel and Maggie. Tiritin, back from her adventures, has turned prissy and deplores their displays of affection. The survivors attempt to resume their pre-war lifestyle, but each in his own way has been scarred by the war.

A gutsy woman of the world, while Viring is a nouveau riche matron whose only pleasures in life are gossip, mahjong and her precious jewels.

The Japanese finally come to the island and move closer to the hacienda, prompting the families to seek refuge further inland, in the Lorenzos’ forest lodge. While the family retainers raise food nearby, the rich folk try to keep up their lifestyle even in rustic surroundings. The women go on making mahjong all day, and Don Claudio, who finances the anti-Japanese resistance secretly, collects butterflies, orchids and cacti, and entertains himself by playing his favorite opera tunes on his inseparable Victrola.

One night, a group of battered guerrillas arrive and the rich refugees come face to face with the bloody and shattering realities of war for the first time. Jo treats the wounded, including Hermes Mercurio, whose tongue was cut off by the Japanese. The guerrillas leave afterwards, with a backward taunt at young Miguel for his cowardice. Hermes is left behind to recuperate and to look after the safety of the Lorenzos and their guests. He later becomes an object of Tiritin’s awakenings passions. Tiritin despises and mocks...
plays. He observed then that “the industry lacks good screen-
play writers.” He also rebelled against the prevailing industry
practice of throwing in everything—song and dance, drama
and action, comic routines—into a film in the belief that
this would draw crowds best.

Against this norm, Chat’s pictures were distinguished by
a sense of artistic unity. His writer’s instincts had long taught
him the fundamental role of unity in any creative endeavor.
He also saw the need for audiences to develop a sense of film
appreciation.

His first picture, which he also scripted, was Kidlet sa
Silangan starring Rogelio de la Rosa and Leila Morena, who
was to be the leading lady in most of Gallardo’s early pic-
tures. His second picture, Tatlong Baleranos, revolved around
agrarian disputes and underwent six censorship sessions be-
fore it could be passed. Jose Padilla Jr. and Anita Linda were in
the lead roles.

His first color film, Kapitan Bagulis, was based on a
novel by the late Clodualdo del Mundo, one of the country’s
renowned Filipino writers. A historical film depicting the
early Filipinos’ racial dignity and sense of freedom symboli-
cized by their seafaring nature, it established the late Efren
Reyes as an action star. Another period film, Sagrado, set
against the violent period of the Philippine Revolution
against Spanish rule, demonstrates Gallardo’s obsessive con-
cern with freedom and the Philippine ethos.

Sagrado starred Leila Morena, who also played the prin-
cipal role in Salubras, the movie that won for Gallardo the
FAMAS award for Best Direction in 1954. Salubras is a
tale of violent strife and political conflict at the waterfront.
Indeed, Gallardo was to make his mark even in the 60s with
urban proletarian dramas like Geron Busabos, the film
which represents him in the 1983 MIFF selection.

Another film from the young Gallardo which was
indicative of his progressive thinking was Salome, produced
in 1952 by Lelia Morena who played the title role. It is
the story of a typical Filipina and the social milieu that has
imbued her femininity with resilience, strength and loyalty.

Since he suffered a mild stroke many years ago, Gallar-
dog has stopped directing movies but has set up his own pro-
duction company. His wife discharges production duties, his
daughter runs the booking office, and a son has taken up
directing.

Today, Gallardo says: “An A-1 picture must contain all
the elements needed not only to satisfy the average movie-
goers but also the intellectuals.” As a film-maker, Gallardo
addressed his works to both audiences. The sophisticated
and the scholarly will recognize in his best works the creative
artist’s perceptions of the world around him—in Gallardo’s
case, of the Philippine scene.

Gallardo thinks, as he did 30 years ago, that the per-
ceptive insights of the Filipino audience should be developed
and honed in seminars and study courses, so they may keep
up with the films now being turned out by film-makers
who have developed the cinema into a very fine and indi-
vidual, yet universal and relevant, art form.

— T.D. Ageroii

Geron Busabos
Geron the Tramp
Geron le Vagabond
1964
Black and white, English and
French subtitles

Direction, Cesar Gallardo; Screen-
play, Augusto Buenaventura;
Cinematography, Arsenio Doña;
Editing, Augusto Salvador; Sound,
Demetrio de Santos. Produced by
Emar Pictures.

Cast
Joseph Estrada, Oscar Roncal, Vic
Andaya, Bebong Osorio, Avel
Morado, Angel Buenaventura,
Angel Confidante, Larry Silva,
Leni Trinidad, Bong Alvarez,
Imelda Ilanan

Synopsis
Geron is a tramp in the main
district of Manila. Idealistic, he
tries to make justice work for the
God-forsaken in this chaotic
badland. He protects the weak
and the poor from all sorts of
exploitors: bullies, petty thieves
and collectors of protection money
(tong). A gang of tong-collectors
tries to get him out of their way
through the most direct method
they know: ambush, but he
manages to hold them off until
the police arrive.

Awards
Best Picture, Best Actor, Best
Screenplay, 1964 FAMAS Awards

Gloriamar’s
Seafood Restaurant at the CCP Complex.

SUPERB CANTONESE CUISINE

Beside Tahanang Pilipino CCP Complex
Manila, Philippines, Tel. Nos. 852-58-42; 831-28-95
Discover the better way to save.

The UNITIME DEPOSIT CERTIFICATE
The time deposit within your reach.

That’s right! You can get a Cocobank Unitime Deposit Certificate for as low as P50 and still earn high interest. You start small… make it grow and earn more for your future. And it’s also available in P100, P500, P1,000, and P5,000 denominations. So take your pick and start your Unitime Deposit now!

It’s totally safe. Because it’s backed by the bigness of Cocobank, the first private Unibank, with capitalization of over 700 million pesos and assets of over 6 billion pesos.

Laurice Guillen

For decades, Filipino cinematic tradition equated good films with action flicks, slapstick comedies, song-and-dance romances, and maudlin melodramas, where stereotyped characters get entangled in convoluted plots and preposterous problems that are invariably solved by coincidence or deus ex machina. Departing from this tradition, the films of Laurice Guillen have brought into the industry a casual realism characterized by sensitivity and introspection.

Guillen’s evolution into a staunch advocate of naturalism in local cinema is best understood perhaps in the light of her initial training as a stage and film actress. While taking her M.A. in Communication Arts at the Ateneo de Manila University in the late ‘60s, Guillen came under the influence of theater director Rolando Tinio, who was partial to the dramatic naturalism of Zola and Chekov. As Irina in Three Sisters, Anna in Anna Karenina, and Lika in The Promise, Guillen practiced and imbued Stanislavsky’s theory and techniques of internalized acting for the theater.

In the television dramas of Lino Brocka which occasioned featured her in the early ‘70s (notably, in Bona, where she played a movie fan obsessed with a movie bit-player, and later, in the top-rated Flor della Rosa series where she is stepmother to the young heroine), Guillen learned to adjust her acting style to another, more visual medium. Here she perfected the creation of “psychological action” through

Guillen’s Films

As Director
1980 Kanal
1981 Salome

As Actress
1971 Cebu Kayo ay Sir
1974 Tinimbang Ka Ngunit Kulang
1975 Tatay na si Erap
1977 Ginising Mo ang Umasa
1978 Gising Ba, Manuja
1980 Bedspacers
1982 Dear God
1983 Moral

Guillen directs Christopher de Leon in Kanal.
the use of her eyes, through minimal but precise changes in blocking, and through creative maximization of light orientations. Here too she learned the techniques of "loosening up," "forgetting the camera," to create a less self-conscious style of acting.

When she finally acted for films (her first was Nestor Torre's Crush Ko si Sr. in 1971), she modified her acting techniques even more. From Lino Brocka who directed her in Tinimbang Ka Ngunit Kulang, Guillen learned that the difference between dramatic acting for stage and for film. From Mike de Leon whom she acted for and observed in Kung Mangarap Ka't Magising, she saw the need to act in a way that effectively conceals the techniques and efforts of acting ("pag-aritng hindi na umaarte"). This type of acting she perfected in her role as mother to an estranged daughter in Marilou Diaz-Abayari's Mortal. This concern for the creation of "real" characters is central to Guillen's film direction as well. Already impressed by the acting realism of Vittorio de Sica's Two Women, Lamberto Avellana's Anak-Daluas (the first part), and Chat Gallardo's Gemon Basabose, Guillen then studied the visual storytelling techniques of her idols Akira Kurosawa (Rashomon, Seven Samurai) and Ingmar Bergman (Virgin Spring, Wild Strawberries), as well as the meticulous cinematography and careful editing of Gerardo de Leon (for whom she acted in Fr. Espinosa, Caridad). From all these, she created the type of film naturalism that is her forte.

Kasal (1980), Guillen's directorial debut, tells of how a young man and a young woman resolve the problems of their respective previous loves, on the eve of their wedding day. Although the plot of the movie was much too complicated and contrived, and in spite of the concessions she had to make to her audience (beautiful people, pretty sets and scenery), Guillen nonetheless succeeded in molding her characters into real people by insisting on a causal but deeply-felt acting style, on ordinary situations (no big dramatic scenes), on mood rather than melodious music, and on accurate, not showy production design. Moreover, she disproved the myth among Filipino film directors that the use of stream-of-consciousness techniques and flashbacks without the traditional bridges (close-up, dissolve, and voice-versa) confuses and alienates an audience spoiled naive by the obvious, chronological plots of genre films. For an initial experiment Kasal was positively received by both the public and Guillen's peers in the industry.

Guillen's second movie, Kung Ako'y Huwag Mo (1980), unfolded a string of situations, after the separation and before the reconciliation, of a young married couple, both on the threshold of success in their respective careers — the girl as a singer, and the man as an M.A. graduate and young teacher. As script and as film, this movie was Guillen through and through. To be sure, her options were not unlimited (she had to give in to the obligatory beautiful scenery and the bed-scene taboos of the principal actress). But, eschewing the plotlessness of Kasal in favor of an "impressionistic" structure, Guillen opted for a "thin" plot, so she could concentrate on creating convincing vignettes of reality, and succeed she did with many scenes which are seamless fusions of character, cinematography and production design. To make the loneliness of the heroine (after her break-up) palpable to us, for example, Guillen assembles this sequence: Nora Auxor lies and tosses on her double bed amidst expensive sheets, with a single lamp beside her; she lights a cigarette and draws a few slow puffs from it; there is a power failure and she is left temporarily in the dark; then slowly, deliberately, painfully, she lights a constellation of candles in opulent crystal bowls. Such an innovative poetization of loneliness was undoubtedly notable, but still, many critics reacted negatively to a film where nothing seemed to be "happening.

Guillen's third movie, Salome (1981), may be considered as the director's homage to Kurosawa, whose influence is seen in the film's structure (three consecutive, conflicting narratives of the same murder) and in its highly visual technique of story-telling. Of her three films, Salome succeeds best because it effectively welds together Guillen's particular style and the tradition of Filipino films. Thus, while Guillen had to set aside subtext and nuances of internalized acting in Salome, she is able nonetheless to paint her characters as believable people. Similarly, although the film had to be of necessity plot-oriented, and had to resolve (unlike Kurosawa's Rashomon) its ambiguities with a definite version of the case, it nevertheless succeeds in creating an atmosphere that helped character, because it objectified the moods and feelings of characters in the sea and the earth, in wind and fire. As a fusion of film-making convention and innovation, Salome won the 1981 Best Film and Best Director award from the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino.

Guillen's movies have received their share of accolades as well, but it cannot be denied that she has brought to her films so far her sensitivity and her conviction that in films, as in life, honesty takes precedence over everything else.

— Nicanor G. Tiongson

Kasal — Pilipino for 'wedding'.

Christopher de Leon and Johnny Wilson in Kasal.

Kasal
1980

Color, no subtitles

Direction, Laureice Guillon; Story and Screenplay, Mario O'Hara; Cinematography, Ricardo Remisus; Production Design, Mel Chionglo; Editing, Efren Jarlego; Music, Jun Latonio; Sound, Vic Macamay. Produced by Trigon Films.

Cast

Arkak Koronel (Grace), Christopher de Leon (Joel), Jay Ilagan (Ernesto), Chanda Romero (Lani), Mia Gutierrez (Ellen)

Synopsis

The film is about an young couple, both from nouveau riche families, who are planning to get married. Joel and Grace are apparently deeply in love with each other. Unknown to each, however, both are harboring restless thoughts of their respective frustrated loves from the past. Joel's secret passion is a mysterious woman he met at the beach some time back; the woman disappeared after their brief but passionate liaison. On the other hand, Grace had been seduced and promised marriage by Ernesto, a saxophonist, who, however, was tricked into marriage by Ellen, Grace's older sister.

The night before the scheduled wedding, Joel and Grace come across their respective old flames. Ernesto gets in touch with Grace to explain that his marriage to Ellen was against his will, professes that he still loves her and asks her to elope to Hong Kong with him. Meanwhile, Joel is treated by his friends to a free night with a call girl as a sort of farewell to his bachelorhood. The woman waiting for him in the hotel room turns out to be Lani, the mysterious girl from his past. Grace turns down Ernesto's offer and Joel leaves Lani. With their past loves out of the way, the wedding goes on as scheduled.
Salome
1981

Color, English and French subtitles

Direction, Laurice Guillen; Screenplay, Ricardo Lee; Story, Laura Guillen; Cinematography, Romeo Vitug; Production Design, Santiago Bose; Music, Ernan Cuerdo; Editing, Efren Jarlego; Sound, Luis Reyes. Produced by Bancam Audiovision Corporation.

Cast
Gina Alajar (Salome), Johnny Delgado (Kario), Dennis Roldan (Jimmy), Boncghi Miraflores, Bruno Punzalan, Armida Signion-Reyna, Tony Santos, Venchito Galvez, Lily Miraflores, Edna May Landicho, Francisco "Koko" Trinidad, Cris Vertido, Carpi Asturias and Jimmy Santos.

Synopsis
The story starts as a seemingly simple crime of passion. Jimmy, the persistent suitor, is stabbed to death by Salome, the young and pretty wife of Kario, an ordinary farmer.

But as the story unfolds, conflicting versions of the crime are given.

Salome’s version is that she killed Jimmy after he tried to rape her. She says that Jimmy had unsuccessfully tried to seduce her and he forced his way through their hut while her husband was away.

But the people in the small fishing town picture Salome as a fatal seductress. Talé, a woman in the village, is positive that Salome lured one of her sons to his death and that what happened to her son also happened to Jimmy.

Jimmy’s version conflicts with the version of Salome and the public. His story is that he caught Salome and Jimmy committting adultery and as a revenge, he forces her to kill him.

Each version carries a bit of truth in it and more than the revelation of the real character of Salome, the film deals with the subjectivity of truth.

Awards and nominations
1982 Fajardo Awards for Best Picture, Best Direction, Best Screenplay, Best Actress and Best Editing; Finalist for Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, Best Cinematography, and Best Production Design.

Gerardo de Leon

Because film is both an art and an industry — an art governed by aesthetic disciplines, and an industry whose existence heavily depends on mass patronage — film direction is an activity that is checkered with compromises and frustrations.

But one director in Philippine cinema whose films display a continuity of style, where sense of reality is not garbled for the sake of box-office appeal, and in which a highly individual mixture of sensuality, tastefulness, grace, irony and vigor is very evident is the late Gerardo de Leon.

Starting in the movies as a character actor in 1937, de Leon a year later directed his first picture, Babay Kabo, a musical starring Fely Valdez, who later became his wife. Also in 1938, he completed his medical studies at the University of Santo Tomas and received his degree of Doctor of Medicine, a profession that he seldom practised. Coming from a family steeped in traditions of the theatre — his father, Hemogenes Ilagan, was writer, director and head of a zarzuela company, while his mother, Casiana de Leon, was a singer, and it was Ilagan’s popular zarzuela, Dalagang Bukid, which Jose Nemenzua, the pioneer Filipino film-maker, chose to adapt for his first feature-length film in 1919 — it was inevitable that Gerry de Leon devoted his lifetime almost wholly to film-making.

His choice was correct. Last year, shortly before his death, he was awarded the highest honor the Philippines can bestow on its artists, and became the second film-maker to receive from President Marcos the title of National Artist for Film. As such, he has become a "national treasure."

De Leon’s works can stand the test of time because
he was always aware — whether consciously or instinctively, it does not matter — of the two basic contents of a film: the visual and the ideological. He devoted his energies, his intelligence and creative faculties, to the organic or inter-related realization of these two basic contents: the ideological, which is concerned with theme, subject or topic; and the visual, which relates to the organization of the images that represent the ideas.

One will always discover with delight and wonder the fact that even in vintage movies like Kamay ni Satanas which won the first Maria Clara Award for Best Picture and Best Direction in 1950, and Sisig, which won the Best Picture award the following year in addition to the Best Actress award for Anita Linda, de Leon always dealt with a relevant topic. Not for him those escapist romances and violence-for-the-sake-of-violence. He developed the topic visually with creative virtuosity, utilizing imagery as a poet or painter does, to convey a complex of associations through representational or concrete details as thought-bearing symbols.

His films have an auteur quality about them, his signature explicit in all his works. Even without seeing the credit titles, one familiar with his style can readily recognize a Gerry de Leon film.

At a time when the aesthetics of films was not yet widely publicized in print, much less discussed by cineastes and film aficionados, Gerry de Leon was already utilizing modern filmic devices such as visual rhythms achieved through the shot, and structural rhythms realized through the equipment and devices of film-making such as the cut, the wipe, etc.

De Leon is famous for his effective camera positions. In composing his shots, he was not only concerned with the current take but also choreographing the succeeding ones. Thus, his structural rhythms effectively induced his audiences to respond to the emotional moods and intellectual values of his scenes.

He composed his shots like a painter, the start of every shot like a painting in the arrangements of its lights and shadows, of its lines and masses. And it is interesting to watch in Gerry de Leon’s films how he used background, and how he moved his camera, not only in tracking shots, but in individual shot-to-shot relationships as well. He was a master of interpolated shots, a technique he used effectively to achieve suspense as in Hanggang sa Dulo ng Daigdig, the story of how a young man is ineluctably drawn into criminal life.

Meticulous in his use of the camera, his visuals possess a distinctive graphic quality. He never moved his subjects in a horizontal direction unless it served his purpose, e.g., the scene of Leopoldo Salcedo and his supporters fleeing from the pursuing guns of Joseph Estrada in The Moises Padilla Story, wherein Gerry wanted to depict the utter hopelessness of an underdog politician’s struggle to fight an oligarchic governor who commands a private army to enforce his repressions of freedom.

Film-making has four integral parts: scripting, casting, shooting and editing. De Leon participated in all phases, so that even if the credit title for a script may not have carried his name, he had much to do with it. This was the reason for the apocryphal story about Adrian Cristobal rejecting the FAMAS award for the screenplay of El Fili-busterismo, because Gerry took some liberties in revising the script during the actual shooting of the picture.

In fairness to both Gerry and Adrian it should be stated that while Gerry made some script revisions to achieve an architectonic pattern for the film, he never changed Adrian’s dialogue when it came to sensitive scenes, particularly those pertaining to politics, because Gerry really respected Adrian as a writer and recognized his authority with respect to the political philosophy of Rizal.

More significantly, the director recognized the scriptwriter’s effective adaptation of the novelist’s dialogue for cinematic needs, shortening some of Rizal’s lines without losing any of their ideological contents or meanings, and always maintaining a speech rhythm that was appropriate to de Leon’s visual style.

Creative film-making involves a complex of devices and disciplines. For example, repetition achieves a visual rhythm designed to create a pattern or reiterate a symbol, as de Leon does with a filmy piece of blood-stained cloth torn from Crispin’s shirt, through which Lina Carriño’s Nilo in the film Noli Me Tangere looks at the blinding noonday sun to show a mind losing its focus, in the act of disintegration. On the other hand, the repetition of common dramatic scenes or comedy lines and routines was unthinkable for de Leon. He had comic scenes, of course; but they were of the situation type, designed to provide relief, or emphasis even, to a tense situation.

One of his best works, Noli Me Tangere, is ideologically significant and visually rich, a film that is well-realized in form and substance. Produced in 1961 for the national
celebrations commemorating the birth centenary of its hero-author Jose Rizal, Noli is a fulfillment of the aesthetic promise shown by de Leon in the 1951 Sisa. El Filibusterismo, its sequel, is also a favorite among film critics. Both films, based on the two novels written by the national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, are fine movies, representative of the best in De Leon’s film art.

With Philippine history as his milieu he created his own visual artifacts of the past, e.g., how the Spanish guardias civiles and Filipino rebels were armed; their uniforms, their equipment, their battle tactics; how the illustrations compartmentalized themselves differently from the common histories; how the towns, the streets, and the houses looked; how town fiestas were observed, meticulously researching the mise-en-scene that was needed for every setting.

Moreover, he always worked as the film editor, the creative artist who determined the shots that would go into the final product, examining his shots carefully to determine just what frames to discard and when a shot should start to fit into the preceding shot.

Because of his control of the creative aspects of a film, Gerry de Leon, respected call Manong (meaning elder brother) by people in the industry, has received praises from the French critics of the Cahiers du Cinema — the group that gave rise to the nouvelle vague in French films and remains a strong force in the French cinema today.

That the nouvelle vague people should appreciate Manong’s films is not strange, considering that their greatest influences John Ford, Howard Hawks, and Alfred Hitchcock also influenced his works.

Gerry de Leon’s films fulfill the auteurs theory of film-making; a film, like a novel, must contain a style, a signature, so to speak, that is the inherent hallmark of an individual creative intelligence.

It is obvious, looking back at his works, that Gerry de Leon’s works were informed with a personal vision rooted in Philippine history and society.

He did some contemporary dramas, too, like Ang Ba-ang Maestra, about the community involvement of a young school teacher; Edik, a psychological thriller about three predatory females involved in a murder case; and Apollo Robles, which is about a Filipino boxer. Banane, his last finished film done in 1975, transformed the Philippine cinema’s most popular musical star Nora Aunor, into a formidable actress. All these films were infused with Philippine traditions and cultural values.

It does not mean that Gerry de Leon never cared about the financial outcome of his films. He cared enough to box-office traits. But he disdained trivial subjects; he was for significant, nationally relevant themes. However, the average movie producer is wary of heavy themes, believing rightly perhaps — that is a losing proposition to tax the intelligence of the audience and that it is more profitable their views, they can understand even with their eyes and minds half-closed. De Leon perforce had to work with the system. But the good films he made have survived today as brilliant gems in the Philippine cinema.

— T.D. Agcoili

Gerardo de Leon’s Films

As Director
1938 Bahay-Kubo
1939 Ano ng Agila
1940 Kaedulit
1941 Pananibangan
1944 The Dawn of Freedom
1946 So Long, America
1947 Jumpos Mo, Gawa
1954 48 Ons
1958 Divo Silang
1960 Jawa sa Lasang Simboryo
1963 Dyasabel
1964 Nugong at Sinator
1965 Hugao
1966 Simoun
1968 Blood Exegesis
1969 Sweethearts
1975 Sisa
1976 Anita Linda sa Sisa.

1959 Aswitan Kitol
1960 Vinta de Ons
1961 Noli Ni Tangere
1962 El Filibusterismo
1963 Basili sa Papal-Lawin
1964 Tunting Bayan
1965 Magpahanggin
1966 The Mad Doctor of Blood Island
1967 The Gold Bikini
1970 Brownout
1971 Lili
1973 Fu, Esperanza, Candula
1974 The Playpen
1975 Baraue
1976 Juan de la Cruz
1977 Other’s (date undetermined):
1. Ang Lumang Bahay sa Gulod
2. The Asylum Story
3. The Sisters
4. You’re My Everything
5. One episode in an omnibus film
6. Unfinished film

As Actor
1937 Puwento Dalka
1938 Ang Pagbabalita
1939 Ano ng Agila
1947 Ang Kamay ng Diyas

Anita Linda sa Sisa.

Sisa
1951
Black and white, no subtitles

Direction, Gerard de Leon; Screenplay, Troletico Santos; Cinematography, Arsenio Doha and Tommy Marcelino; Editing, Victoriano Calib, Sound, Dometrio Santos; Music, Ariston Aveñilo. Produced by Premiere Pictures.

Cast
Anita Linda, Eddie del Mar, Reynaldo Dane, Ruben Rustia, Bobbie Valenzuela, Pancho Pelagio.

Synopsis
The story is based on a character from the national hero Jose Rizal’s Noli Me Tangere, the first of his two novels. Sisa is the mother of two boys who work as helpers in the church of San Diego town. The head sacristan of the church steals money from the church coffers and accuses the boys of theft. The cruel parish priest tortures the boys, killing Crispin, the younger of the two, in the process. Basilio, the elder boy, escapes to avoid prison. The same night, Pedro (Sisa’s husband), who spends all his time gambling in the local cockpit, comes home and takes all of Sisa’s savings, after eating the food prepared by the woman for her children. Basilio comes home, wounded by a bullet from a pursuing guardia civil (the local militia). He tells his shocked mother about their ordeal in the church.

Sisa goes to the priest’s house to ask for her missing son but is sent away by the sacristan who stands firm in his accusation of the two brothers’ thievery the night before. Back in her house, she is met by the militia looking for her sons, but Basilio has fled again. The militia turn their attention to the mother and abuse her.

Sisa goes mad, roaming the streets, homeless, and occasionally helping out in some rich man’s house in exchange for some food. Some time later, mad mother and fugitive son come across each other at the town outskirts. Sisa is shocked by the encounter into a moment of lucidity when she recognizes Basilio.

But weakness and exposure have taken their toll on the poor woman. The shock is traumatic and she dies in the arms of her son.

Awards
Best Direction, Best Actress, 1951 Maria Clara Awards
Mike de Leon

Mike de Leon spent his childhood in the family-owned LVN studio, one of the three major studios of the forties and the fifties. He studied cinematography in Germany and the United States and worked to create the quality that LVN laboratory is known for.

In 1975, he formed his own company, CineManila, whose initial offering was the monumental Meynila: sa Kuko ng Liwanag, of which he was also the cinematographer. In 1976, he directed his first film, Ito (Pitch-Black), a psychological drama of a psychic who is haunted by a past murder, in which the supernatural is suggested rather than exploited. His second film, Kung Mangarap Ka ‘s Magising (Moments in a Stolen Dream, 1977) touched on the bourgeois values of the upper class as two lovers meet and separate in Baguio and Sagada. His film Kakabaka-baka Ka Ba? (Will Your Heart Beat Faster?), 1980 is a fine, innovative spoof of the country’s sacred cows, using Mother Goose language to hit at, among others, the Japanese and Chinese presence in the Philippines. His fourth film Batch ’81 depicts the initiation rites of aspiring nephews into quasi-tribal fraternities, and is injected with so much double meaning that the gory initiation rites become a disturbing metaphor of post-Martial Law Philippines. His last film, Kisapmata (In the Wink of an Eye) delves into the mine of authority in a closely-knit family.

The Mike de Leon style always hints at meanings other than those plotted out and creates powerful, disturbing images. Mike de Leon’s last two films Batch ’81 and Kisapmata were shown together at the 1982 Directors’ Fortnight in Cannes, marking the first time in its history that two films by the same director were ever exhibited.

— Agustin V. Sotto

Kisapmata

In the Wink of an Eye
1981

Color, English subtitles

Direction, Mike de Leon; Screenplay, Clodualdo Del Mundo Jr., Raquel Villavicencio, Mike de Leon; Cinematography, Rodol Lacap; Editing, Ike Jarlego, Jr.; Production design, Raquel Villavicencio; Music, Jim Paredes; Sound, Ramon Reyes; Choreography, Lea Locsin. Produced by LVN Pictures.

Synopsis

This satirical comedy focuses on two pairs of lovers who get caught in the crossfire between drug-dealing Japanese and Chinese agents. The Japanese have smuggled into the country a large quantity of opium in the form of a cassette tape concealed in the pocket of a young Filipino returning from Japan. Later, they trace and trail the young man and his friends to recover the tapes, but Chinese agents are after the tape as well. The chase ends in a Baguio church which, in reality, is the Japanese headquarters. Here the lovers discover the Japanese plan to use fake nuns and priests for the country-wide distribution of opium in the guise of hosts, a scheme that is calculated to bring the country under the power of Japan. A battle ensues between the Japanese and the Chinese, and between them and the Filipinos. In the end, the Filipinos win and the lovers get married.

Cast

Christopher de Leon, Charo Santos, Jay Ilagan, Sandy Andolong, Bobby Garrovillo, Johnny Delgado, Armi da Siguion-Reyna, Leo Martinez, Nanette Inventor, Moody Diaz, Joe Jardil, Danny Javier, George Javier.
plans are discovered by her mother, to whom Mila confesses that she has been raped by her father. Mila escapes after a medical checkup. The couple flees to a suburban town. Mad with rage, Dadong storms the Mandanas house looking for his daughter and threatens the household with a gun.

He vents his anger on Dely and threatens to kill her if she does not bring Mila back. Dely arranges a meeting with Noel’s father and Dadong; an apologetic and seemingly conciliatory Dadong talks the man into bringing Noel and Mila back to Manila. At the Carandang house, when the newlyweds come to get Mila’s things, Dadong begs the couple to stay. Mila refuses. Dadong quietly goes to his room, takes out a gun, and with the calmness of a madman he shoots his wife, Noel, Mila and then turns the gun on himself.

Awards and Nominations
Best Picture, Best Direction, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actress, Best Supporting Actor, Best Cinematography, Best Production Design, Best Story, Best Screenplay, Best Sound, 1982 Metro Manila Film Festival.

Cast
Mark Gil (Sid Lucero), Sandy Andolong (Tina), Ward Luarca (Pacoy Ledesma), Noel Trinidad (Santy Santillon), Ricky Sandico (Ronnie Roxas Jr.), Jimmy Javier (Vince), Rod Lesido (Arni Enriquez), Charito Solis (Arni’s mother), Chanda Romero (Arni’s mother), Johnny Delgado (fraternity doctor)

Synopsis
Sid Lucero, 26 years old, single, neophyte Pre-Med student at a Manila university, whose ambition is to attain membership in the Alpha Kappa Omega fraternity, narrates the story of Batch ’81: “The initiation took place within a period of six months. Originally, the batch was composed of seven neophytes. In the end only five survived. I was one of the survivors. Because I was not dumb enough to make a mistake. “Our weekly sessions were held in a converted game room in the frat house. It was as if we were buried alive in that stifling base- ment. We referred to it as the dungeon, and here we had our cathartic experience that left its scar. “At first it was the physical torture – being beaten up and spat upon, molten candles being poured on to your open palm, medical forceps clamped tightly on various parts of the body – which I dreaded the most. But later on, we felt it better to be beaten to a pulp by the masters than to be subjected to psychological violence and terror. At least, physical pain was temporary and the mind ceased to recoil as soon as the body healed.

“But we endured all this. We had to, we wanted to. Only to prove that we could be one with the frat. And we were not sorry. In brotherhood, we found strength, we found power.

“How we endured the initiation, how we submitted ourselves to the dictates of the masters, how we accepted what you would consider senseless deaths and senseless killings, how we became masters of the Alpha Kappa Omega – that’s the story of Batch ’81.”

Awards and Recognition
Presented at the Directors’ Fortnight, 1982 Cannes Film Festival.
Tatlong Taóng Walang Diyos
(Three Godless Years)
1976
Color, no subtitles
Direction, Mario O’Hara; Screenplay, Mario O’Hara; Cinematography, Conrado Baltazar; Production Design, Fiel Zabar; Music, Minda Azarcon, Sound, Gaudencio Barredo; Editing, Efren Jarlego. Produced by NV Pictures.

Cast
Nora Aunor, Christopher de Leon, Bembol Roco, Peque Gallaga

Synopsis
Set during the latter three years of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines during the Pacific War, Tatlong Taóng Walang Diyos is the tragic love story between a Japanese imperial army officer and a Laguna village schoolteacher. Rosario (Nora Aunor) has a suitor in childhood friend and townmate Crispin (Bembol Roco). When war breaks out, Crispin flees to the mountains to join the guerrillas in the Resistance movement. The Japanese army group that occupies Rosario’s town is headed by Capt. Masugi (Christopher de Leon), a young Japanese who was born in Manila and is half Filipino. As an officer, he advocates humane treatment of the townfolk. Capt. Masugi meets Rosario, woos her but is initially rebuked. He rapes Rosario, who later realizes she really loves Masugi after all. The townfolk harbor ill feelings against Rosario and her family when they learn about the relationship between the schoolteacher and the Japanese commander. Meanwhile, Rosario’s childhood friend Crispin has survived Bataan and the Death March. Rosario gives birth and Masugi marries her. The townfolk’s resentment against Rosario’s family worsens. When the American liberating forces return to the Philippines, the Japanese army begins its systematic retreat from all the towns under their control. Masugi leaves with Rosario and their child, but guerrillas waylay them, killing Masugi and the child. At the same time, Rosario’s parents are slain by their own townmates whose relatives were killed by the Japanese during the occupation. Rosario returns to her town and faces the wrath of the townfolk. In the film’s finale, a mob of town women shear off Rosario’s hair preparatory to killing her inside the town church. Crispin returns to his hometown to find Rosario’s body in a make-shift morgue within the schoolgrounds.

Awards and nominations
Best Actress, 1976 Urian Awards and 1976 FAMAS Awards
Nominated for Best Cinematography, 1976 Urian Awards
Eddie Romero

Eddie Romero is a moviemaker with an eye on the international market.

Since the late 1950s, he has gone into co-productions with American companies, using combined foreign and Filipino casts. The filming by an all-Filipino crew usually takes place in the Philippines where the cost of production is cheap.

Eddie writes, directs and produces his movies. If he has made 20 motion pictures for export, he has also produced some 40 movies for the domestic theaters.

Although still in his fifties, Eddie has 41 years of the motion picture business behind him. He wrote his first screenplay at the age of 17 for the film Ang Maesta of RDR Productions in 1941. His short story writing experience with the Philippine Free Press helped him in shaping up the scenario.

Ang Maesta, directed by Gerardo de Leon, starred Rogelio de la Rosa and Rosa del Rosario — the king and queen of Philippine movies then. It turned out to be a blockbuster and inspired Eddie to write another screenplay, Anong Ganda Mo, for Rogelio de la Rosa, Norma Blanchfield and Angel Esmeralda.

Eddie says he never saw the film because it was shown after the Pacific War broke out, and he had gone home to Dagupan, Negros Oriental. He was born there on July 7, 1924 to Jose E. Romero, later the Philippine ambassador to London and a Secretary of Education, and Pilar Sinco. He was baptized Edgar Romero.

After the war, Eddie Romero resumed his association with his mentor, Gerardo de Leon, at Sampaguita Pictures. Eddie scripted So Long America, which was directed by Gerry, with his wife Fely Vallejo playing opposite Angel Esmeralda.

When actress Carmen Rosales had to leave for the United States in October 1947, Eddie had to rush the scenario for two of her films: Mameng, Initibig Kita and Hindi Kita Malimot, both directed by Gerry de Leon, with Eddie as his
associate director. Mameng co-starred handsome newcomer Oscar Moreno. Hindi Kitia Malinor had Leopoldo Salcedo, Fred Montilla, Paraluman and Maria Cristina as the other lead stars.

Carmen and Leopoldo rushed work on a third film, Ang Karay ng Diyos, which was Eddie's first directional assignment. He was 23.

His next picture was a Tita Duran-Pancho Magdalena starer, Kasintahan sa Pangarap. The romantic pair had acquired a reputation as the top idols of the hobby-boxers. The finished reels of Kasintahan were among the P10 million worth of nitrate celluloid stock that went up in smoke in the Sampaguita studio fire of 1951. Eddie had to re-shoot the picture.

It took the tearjerkling slum melodrama Roberto of nine-year-old Tessie Agana to ball Sampaguita out of the ashes. At this time, Eddie travelled to London, Paris, Rome (where he studied film-making with Roberto Rossellini) and to Hollywood.

Upon his return to Manila, Eddie directed Ang Pinas na at ng Pilipinas, starring Tessie Agana, Fred Montilla and Myrna Delgado in Eddie's adaptation of the Mark Twain story, The Prince and the Pauper. Later, when the Manila Times Publishing Co. gave out the Maria Clara awards — the first artistic recognition awards for local movies — Romero won as Best Director of 1951 and Agana got a special award as Best Child Actress.

Eddie directed a series of Tita Duran-Pancho Magdalena hits like Ating Pagligay and Saban ang Barbaros at El Indio, starring Cesar Ramirez and Nena Cardenas, for Sampaguita.

Then, the young and ambitious film-maker put up his own Eddie Romero Productions and opened out the small drama Buhay Alamang with Anita Linda, Fred Montilla, Tito Arevalo and Mona Lisa, at the Movie Technical Services studio in San Francisco del Monte. Eddie and Cesar Aguirre received the 1952 FAMAS screenplay award for this movie.

Meanwhile, Eddie wrote the screenplay for Gerry de Leon's award-winning picture Ang Saua sa Lumeong Simbang yro, in which the young Rita Gomez was introduced. Later, he also directed Rita's first starring film, Malديث, with Pancho Magdalena, for Sampaguita.

Films for Export

A decade after he had gone into directing films, Eddie ventured into co-productions for the foreign market.

With Premiere-People's Pictures, he made a picture on the early days of the American occupation of the Philip- pines, entitled The Day of the Trumpet. The American cast included John Agar, Richard Arlen, William Phipps and Myron Healey. The Filipino cast had Pancho Magdalena, Alicia Vergel, Eddie Infante, Cielito Legaspi, Boy Planas, Vic Diaz and Max Alvarado. The Day of the Trumpet won an award for child actor Boy Planas at the fifth Asian Film Festival held in Manila in April 1958.

Under the aegis of Cirio Santiago-Halcyon, Romero directed Man on the Run featuring Burgess Meredith as a desperate man looking for the ex-cop who kidnapped his wife.

Romero went into partnership with Kane Lynn in 1958 and produced The Scavengers, directed by the famous John Cromwell, at Premiere Studio in Grace Park and on location. The film starred Vince Edwards (who became the famous television doctor Ben Casey) and Carol Ohmart.

Francis Ledezra played a mad scientist who converted a man (Jean-Louis), while Lynn-Romero's Terror to a Man (1959), Greta Thyessen of Denmark and Oscar Keese co-starred.

Lyon-Romero then produced 13 episodes of a television series on Orient spies called Counter-Thrust. The first starred Diane Jergens and Todd Andrews. The next film was Escape to Paradise (Laurel and Hardy) with Leopoldo Salcedo, Diane Jergens and Johnny Monteiro, American International distributed it.

Gerry de Leon and Eddie Romero co-directed Amok, starring Jock Mahoney, Marjia Dean, Pancho Magdalena and Mike Parsons. Eddie protested the title Moro Witch Doctor tagged on it by the distributor, 20th Century-Fox. The Walls of Hell starring maritess idol Fernando Poe Jr., Jock Mahoney and lovely Cecilia Lopez was a box-office smash. Poe made another picture about guerrillas for Eddie The Rangers, The 1965 — co-starring John Saxon, Vic Silayan, Vic Diaz, Mike Parsons and Robert Arevalo.

Eddie made Passionate Strangers for MJP Productions in Dumaguete in 1966-67. It was a fast-paced Hollywood treatment of a love triangle. American executive Courtney (Mike Parsons) arrives in the Philippines and discovers that his wife (poetess Valora Nolan) and Roberto (Maria Montenegro) are lovers. Passionate Strangers won six of the FAMAS trophies in 1966, including the director's award for Eddie Romero.

Eddie Romero and Gerardo de Leon collaborated in directing Brides of Blood Island for Hemisphere Films of New York. Beverly Hills played the wife of an American scientist (Kent Taylor) who follows him to an island where an atom bomb has been exploded. She tries to attract a Peace Corps man (John Ashley) and a native (Mario Montenegro) on the island. in the end, a monster spawned by the atom bomb kills her.

Hemisphere Films was reorganized after Eddie Rrome ro bought out his shares and formed his own Hemisphere group in the Philippines. The first Romero picture under the new Hemisphere was Raiders of Leyte Gulf in 1967, with Mike Parsons, Liza Moreno, Leopoldo Salcedo, Efren Reyes and Eddie Mesa. It was internationally released and received commendations from Sight and Sound and Variety publications.

Manila, Open City was scripted, directed and line produced by Eddie Romero for Nepomuceno Productions in 1967. James Shigeta, Alex Nichols and John Ashley starred with Charlito Solis, Ric Rodrigo, Mario Montenegro and Nova Villa in the war film, which won the Manila Film Festival's Rajah Soliman award as best picture. Eddie has produced several other films since then.

The Filipino Film Festival in 1976 chose as best picture Romero's Gamita Kami Noon, Pano Kayo Nga'yon? . It is the story of peasant boy Kulas who seeks his fortune in Manila, finds it, and loses it. In the end, he finds his identity as Filipino.

The film also won awards for director Romero, actor

1964 Amok 11

1965 Superman

1965 Flight to Fury

1965 Only the Brave Know Hell (The Ravagers)

1966 The Brides of Blood Island

1966 The passionate Strangers

1967 Manila, Open City

1968 The Mad Doctor of Blood Island

1969 Beast of Blood

1970 The Beast of the Yellow Night

1971 The Big Doll House/Midnight People

1972 Woman Hunt

1973 Beyond Atlantis

Black Mama, White Mama

1974 Savage Sintray

1975 Sudden Death

1976 Gamito Kami Noon, Pano Kayo Nga'yon

1977 Sinog' Kapabil, Sinog' Kaping (Macario episco) unreleased

1978 Apocalypse Now

1979 Durango ti Totoy Bante

1980 Agung

1981 Kamikazie

1982 Dantes

1. Original screenplay by Romero

2. Direction and screenplay by Romero

3. Direction and original screenplay by Romero

4. Direction by Romero

5. Direction and screenplay by Romero, produced or co-produced by Romero

6. Coproduced by Romero

7. Directed and coproduced by Romero

8. Co-directed, coproduced by Romero

9. As associate producer

10. Screenplay by Romero, produced by Romero

11. Coproduced and co-directed by Romero

12. Directed and produced by Romero

13. As overall production coordinator

14. Screenplay by Romero

15. The Walls of Hell

16. Only the Brave Know Hell

17. The Brides of Blood Island

18. The Passionate Strangers

19. Manila, Open City

20. The Mad Doctor of Blood Island

21. Beast of Blood

22. The Beast of the Yellow Night

23. The Big Doll House/Midnight People

24. Woman Hunt

25. Beyond Atlantis

Black Mama, White Mama

26. Savage Sintray

27. Sudden Death

28. Gamito Kami Noon, Pano Kayo Nga'yon

29. Apocalypse Now

30. Durango ti Totoy Bante

31. Agung

32. Kamikazie

33. Dantes

34. Original screenplay by Romero

35. Direction and screenplay by Romero

36. Direction and original screenplay by Romero

37. Direction by Romero

38. Direction and screenplay by Romero, produced or co-produced by Romero

39. Coproduced by Romero

40. Directed and coproduced by Romero

41. As associate producer

42. Screenplay by Romero, produced by Romero

43. Coproduced and co-directed by Romero

44. Directed and produced by Romero

45. As overall production coordinator

46. Screenplay by Romero
Ganito Kami Noon, Paano Kayo Ngayon?
As We Were 1976

Color, English subtitles

Direction, Eddie Romero; Screenplay, Eddie Romero and Roy Iglesias; Cinematography, Justo Paulino; Production Design, Laida Lim-Perez and Pegue Gallaga; Music, Lutgardo Labad; Editing, Ben Barcelona; Sound, Demetrio de Santos. Produced by Hemisphere Pictures, Inc.

Cast
Christopher de Leon (Kulas), Gloria Diaz, Eddie Garcia, Leopoldo Salcedo, Dranreb, Rosemarie Gil, E.A. Rebeca, Tsing Tong-Tsai, Johnny Vicar.

Synopsis
The film is a picaresean account of the ups and downs in the life of a naive peasant boy, Kulas, who wanders wildly into the Philippine Revolution of 1896-1898, witnessing the fall of the Spanish regime and the arrival of the Americans. His misfortunes and misadventures begin when his hut burns down due to his neglect. Leaving the farm to look for a new place to stay, he falls in with a priest fleering a band of thieves. The priest asks Lucas to do him the favor of taking his illegitimate son to Manila. Enrouted to the capital, Kulas and the kid meet a moving theater group; our hero falls in love with the lead actress. But Kulas has an errand to accomplish and the theater troupe has an itinerary to follow, so he does not have a chance to declare his love.

With the boy in tow, Kulas reaches Manila by boat, on board which he makes the acquaintance of a Chinese merchant who guides him through the city. After delivering the boy to his destination, Kulas is at loose ends until he meets the stage actress again, who is now married to a Spanish mestizo (half Filipino).

Kulas gets caught up in the Revolution when the Spanish soldiers mistake him for a rebel. He is imprisoned but escapes, with the aid of a detained revolutionary, just hours before he is to be executed.

Even before the Revolution against Spain has been resolved, American soldiers arrive in the city, and the chaos is aggravated. After his last meeting with the actress, Kulas — pushed to manhood by his experiences — contemplates his future as well as his emerging identity as a Filipino.

Awards and Nominations:
Best Picture, Best Direction, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, Best Screenplay, Best Production Design; and finalist for Best Cinematography, 1976 Urian Awards.

Banta ng Kahapon
Double-Cross 1977

Color, English and French subtitles

Direction, Eddie Romero; Screenplay, Eddie Romero; Cinematography, Justo Paulino; Production Design, Gay Dolorfino; Music, Berg Villapando, Marilyn Villapando, Vic Santiago; Editing, Ben Barcelona. Produced by Hemisphere Pictures, Inc.

Cast
Vic Vargas (Reg Corpas), Bembol Roco (Stg. Riger), Roland Dantes (Tino), Chanda Romero (Morgan's mistress), Rodrick Paulate (Berto), Lito Legaspi (Bobby Alvaran), Celita de Castro (Luisa) and Ruben Rustia (Don Julio Serrano)

Synopsis
Set against the backdrop of the 1969 congressional elections, the film tells a story of men who are pawns in a political milieu dominated by the gun. These are amoral men, beholden to whoever can buy the highest for their services.

Don Julio Serrano orders the killing of Congressman Alvaran. The mission is carried out by Tino, a mute ex-convict who is hired for the job by the Don’s henchman Morgan, on the very day he gets out of prison. After the killing, Tino is hunted by Morgan’s men (who want to silence him), by the policemen headed by a Sgt. Rigar, and by Reg Corpas, bodyguard to the slain congressman.

Meanwhile, Don Julio has joined forces with Bobby Alvaran, the congressman’s son. Tino now poses a threat to this unholy alliance. The mute confronts Corpas and his men in a gun-blasting finale.

Awards and Nominations
Selected one of 10 official entries to the 1977 Metro Manila Film Festival. Finalist for Best Director.
Manuel Silos

If the Filipino film industry has achieved expertise in the technique and language of film, it owes this to those who led the way for its advancement. One of them is Manuel Silos — actor, director, writer, musician, technician and inventor — whose 40 years in films spanned both silent and talking pictures.

Born on January 1, 1906, to a musician-father who put up one of the first photographic studios in Manila, Manuel Silos was exposed at an early age to photography. He was the fourth of seven children in an illustrious family that includes Luis (soundman), Octavio (director), Cesar (cinematographer) and Augusto (labman).

In 1927, Manuel Silos directed a 16mm silent film based on an almanac comic strip entitled Tres Sangagos. This was later made into a three-part serial, The Three Tramps. The brothers Silos themselves acted, filmed, edited, and completed post-production on the movie in a temporary laboratory.

In 1930, when Banahaw Pictures was established, Manuel Silos and Carlos Vander Tolosa were asked to direct for the new company. It was these two directors who wreaked the Filipino film away from the static image towards the use of montage.

With the arrival of the talkies in the mid-1930s, Manuel Silos pioneered in the use of new techniques, demonstrating Filipino ingenuity to foreign technicians. His first talking picture, Ang Mage-inang Makara, starring Rosa del Rosario and Jose Padilla Jr., was a success. Silos transferred to Jose Nepomuceno’s Paratone Hispano-Filipino and directed films like the popular Laging Maskara and Kabataan. When Sampaguita Pictures was founded in 1937, Manuel Silos directed a few films like Tairata and Dalisay.

During the Pacific War, Manuel Silos became an actor and xylophone player. In 1946, he made Victory Joe for LVN Pictures, followed by films like Haayaya, a 1953 Philippine-Indonesian co-production, on to Biyaya ng Lupa in 1959.

Besides feature films, Manuel Silos also made comedy serials, thriller shorts and newreels, such as one on the eruption of Mayon Volcano.

Because of his background, Manuel Silos was just the right director for musical films. He gained recognition for Api! Kalisad which had established Fely Vallejo as a superstar. Manuel Silos’ experience in botehul helped him to create unforgettable production numbers like Hagdanan ng Kalayaan.

Besides directing films, Manuel Silos contributed to the development of film technology, especially in animation and trick photography. He perfected and patented at great cost the Synchro lens, an early form of the zoom lens, and Siloscope, a 90-degree lens.

His interest in music and electronics created a different kind of musical in which the camera not only recorded the event but was an active participant in it. His fascination with the technology of radio electronics may be seen in Mister-yoso, 1-2-3 and Poppa Love. Noteworthy is Tuley ang Ligaya, where he employed a split screen, and produced the effect of Nida Blanca dancing with the camera.

Manuel Silos is best remembered as the director of Biyaya ng Lupa, written by Celso Al. Carunungan, in which the contentment as well as the bitter realities of rural life are fully realized on film, with outstanding performances by Leroy Salvador and Joseph de Cordova.

Many have benefited from Manuel Silos’ work. He and a few other pioneer film makers have made it possible for the Filipino film to stride from infancy towards maturity.

Agustin V. Sotto

Biyaya ng Lupa

Blessings of the Land
Benediction de la Terre
1959

Black and white, English and French subtitles

Direction: Manuel Silos; Story: Celso Al. Carunungan; Screenplay: Celso Al. Carunungan and Pablo Naval; Cinematography: Remigio Young; Music: Juan Silos Jr.; Editing: Enrique Jarlego; Sound: July P. Hidalgo

Cast: Rosa Rosal, Tony Santos, Leroy Salvador, Carmencita Abad, Carlos Padilla Jr., Marita Zobel, Joseph de Cordova, Danilo Jurado

Synopsis: A young couple marry and start life together tending a lanzones orchard. The conflict arises when Jose, now the father of two young men, a young woman, and a boy, incurs the enmity of Bruno, a wielding who is rumored to have killed his wife.

Unaware of the rumors about him, Bruno is eagerly looking around for a second wife, but is always met with evasions and rejections. Choleng, Jose’s goddaughter, is in utter terror of Bruno, but Bruno persists in courting her. Trying to escape Bruno’s advances, Choleng falls into a cliff and dies. Bruno is forced to flee to the mountains.

Convinced that the people have caused all his misfortunes, he covertly sells his land in order to carry out a plan of vengeance. He rapes Jose’s daughter, and when Jose hunts him down, Bruno and his cronies kill him. The anger of the barrio folk has escalated and Bruno decides to flee to another barrio. Later, he and his hired men are paid by a greedy landowner to sabotage Jose’s lanzones blooms. The people repulse them.

Awards: Best Picture and Best Story, 1959; FAMAS Awards; Best Supporting Actor, 1960 Asian Film Festival
The 16mm Film-Maker

With its unexpected winning of the International Critics’ Prize at the 1977 Berlin International Film Festival, Kidlat Tahimik’s Mahabarang Bangsangot (The Perfumed Nightmare) focused our attention on alternative forms of cinema in the Philippines. Ironically, Tahimik is more the exception than the rule: what industry exists for 16mm and Super-8mm short films is largely limited to institutional documentaries and government developmental shorts that are anything but alternative. A handful of examples do exist, however, that demonstrate the form’s inherent resiliency. Among the earliest “art films”—such as they were called in more innocent times— is Rodolfo Paras’ Persé’s Conversations in Space—an animated colored short which played on the multifarious variations possible with moving vertical bars in a manner that would now be distinctly identified with MacLaren, Ferde Grofe, Jr.’s Soul of a Fortesque, produced in cooperation with veteran Filipino documentarist Ben Pingo, was a somnambulist tribute to the island fortress of Corregidor, silent for the most part with occasional expressionistic snatches of music. The cult item of the 60s produced its own flowering of 16mm expressions, although as was the fashion, these works invariably existed largely within the larger framework of “happenings,” poetry readings and other Petits poèmes du temps of the bohemian café society of the times. One film-maker who transcended the anemic impulses of this era was Michael J. Parsons, a Filipino-American whose The Wall and Scarecrow, made in cooperation with Henry Francia, then a young Filipino film-maker from New York City, revealed a technical polish far above that of their contemporaries.

Subsequently, Parsons has ventured into the mainstream movie industry, producing and starring in The Passionate Strangers, 1976, directed by Eddie Romero and in the United States, co-producing Dusty and Sweetie Mayre which received favorable notices in the mid-70s. Since then, Parsons has retreated once again to the quiet pursuit of print-making and the fine arts, although with his present Filipino confreres, Virgilio Aviado, he is not averse to doing 16mm experiments and animations. Henry Francia, for his part, was to complete the remarkable On the Way to India Consciousness I Reached China, Part I during an extended stay in New York City under the aegis of a JDRII fund grant in the late 60s. A “personal” film in the truest sense of the word, India has been shown at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York City and has received endorsement from the likes of Jonas Mekas and Carl van Doren. Francia has since worked on Parts II and III of India, but on the evidence of this film’s immediate sequel, a colored travesty of a home movie, featuring all the self-indulgent excesses of the 70s sexual revolution, it would appear that Francia’s lasting contribution to the Philippine alternative cinema must be based on a fraction of his trilogy.

Mike de Leon, currently the fair-haired boy of Philippine cinema, has also ventured into the short form, completing a 16mm surreal experiment shortly before he directed his first feature, Itim. ClaudioLucho del Mundo Jr., a youthful expatriate of de Leon, has also completed a number of 16mm documentaries, most notably on a nursery for disturbed children in the U.S. and another on Lino Brocka shooting Maynila. Closer to reportage than anything else, these films are “alternative” only in the sense that they eschew the usual commercial purposes served by this type of documentation. The University of the Philippines Film Center, since its formation in 1976, has been a haven for younger film-makers who seek different forms of cinematic expression other than those available to them within the local movie and television industry. Amable Aguiluz VI’s Mount Banahaw, Holy Mountain, made under a grant from the Council of Living Traditions, was to win a silver medal from an international short film held in Teheran. The annual film workshops held by the U.P. Film Center have also contributed towards fostering individualistic uses of film among its many participants, although an outgrowth of this is the emergence of the ranks of this university group.

A “personal” film sponsorship by the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines sponsored the First Annual Short Film Festival Competition, attracting a large number of entries from both the amateur and professional sectors. Classifying short films into “experimental,” “specialized,” and “non-specialized” films, the competition yielded winners that typified the progression of a conventional impulse alien to the idea of alternative cinema. The lone exception, perhaps, was Alfred Yuzon’s Shamen Wars, a visually quirky new age spoof of his last remaining contribution to the Philippine alternative cinema must be based on a fraction of his trilogy.

Kidlat Tahimik

One more for the irony book in these rumor-filled times: while undesirably the most internationally celebrated Filipino film-maker to date, Kidlat Tahimik aka Eric de Guia remains practically unknown in his own country.

No great wonder that. He operates off the mainstream, flowing along on a personal current that somehow arrives at an impossibly translucent pool, a small pristine one where the creative home movie finds its own level of success. De Guia has done two feature-length films in 16mm color which would necessarily be called “underground.” They trace the metaphysical meanderings of one Kidlat Tahimik, a hog from Balim, Laguna, who is transported by fluke to the West (primarily Paris then Bavaria, where he pursues his fascination for what may seem an odd assembly of concepts and images ranging from space travel to onions and yoyos. Kidlat Tahimik (played by Eric himself with the perfect Third World charm of a Baguio naif) muses on the variances of technology and racial temper, touching on the old issues of his, small, progress vs. memory, the commercial vs. the personal.

His first film, Mahabarang Bangsangot (Perfumed Nightmare) won the International Critics’ Prize in the 1977 Berlin Film Festival. Francis Ford Coppola picked up the film for American circulation after meeting Eric de Guia in Cannes in 1979. It was shown for a long stretch of weekends at New York’s Bleecker St. Cinema, attended by highly positive reviews from notable film critics Vincent Canby of The New York Times and J. Hoberman of the Village Voice.

Wrote Canby: “Here is a sweet, funny, witty, intelligent little movie, which is also primitive to the extent that its style is direct, sometimes awkward but always unfussily conscious. It tends to defy analysis by being so successfully — and so exactly — what it appears to be, that is, a meditation by a young man on his life and the world he aspires to join.”

Hoberman called it a “highly original first feature,” a “kind of comic Third World psychodrama,” “a product of inspired pragmatism.” Hoberman went on: “More underground than most Third World films, it’s far more Third World than most underground ones ... Tahimik is a man of undeniable wit and he details a certain consciousness so engaging that, even as it is, The Perfumed Nightmare seems likely to become some sort of classic.” The film gained inclusion in Hoberman’s list of 10 best films shown from 1977 to 1979, ranking it among such notables as Godard’s Every Man For Himself, Scorsece’s Raging Bull, Resnais’ Mon Oncle d’Amérique, and de Palma’s Dressed To Kill.

Susan Sontag pitched in with her own blurb: “The Perfumed Nightmare makes one forget the months of weary movie-going for it reminds one that invention, insolence, enchantment — even innocence — are still available to film.”

Similar positive write-ups have followed Perfumed Nightmare in its itinerant course through some of the world’s most important festivals, including those of Edinburgh, Locarno, Cartagena, Toronto, Thessalonika, Johannesburg,
and Belgia... Consistently noted were the amazingly low $10,000 cost of the film, as well as its stylistic comparability to such diverse earlier works as those of Jonas Mekas, Jacques Tati, and Buster Keaton.

Jonathan Rosenbaum, writing for the Soho Weekly News, marveled at the "nearly total absence of technique" of "this doggedly homemade production," which is "as unerringly screwball as a house built of chewing gum wrappers and cigarette packs." Continued Rosenbaum: "Working with the most non-existent sense of rhythm since the films of Daniel Schmidt, Tahimik's non-technique initially recalls the writer stance of a conscious technical primitive like Luc Moullet... An early sequence recalls Bunuel's Mexican Bus Ride, while a late episode, intercutting the lowering of an onion-shaped church dome with the cries of a pregnant woman, suggests a grammar school version of Dovzhenko crossed with, say, Little Lulu. As a form of modpiple Third World modernism, it's a unique mixture all right..."

Mababangong Bangungot had its first Philippine screening early in 1978, appropriately enough in an overcrowded court in Balian, a small town between Pakil and Pangil by the Laguna lakeshore. Hundreds of de Guia's townspeople cheered the film on with the same ingenuous bliss of spirit with which it had been made. Recognition of town characters became the preoccupation on that unforgettable premiere night. Since then the film has enjoyed a number of small screenings in Manila and Baguio, delighting cinemagoers and cineastes with its broad humor and unmistakable good cheer.

De Guia has since completed a sequel, titled Saing Lamanika ng Yoyo! Saing Lamanika ng Moon Buggy? (Who Invented the Yoyo? Who Invented the Moon Buggy?) The character Kidlat Tahimik is back in Bavaria, spinning a yoyo as he yodels across a valley to the tune of Saludan-ay. "The moon is no longer virgin," he muses. "Men have driven their cars all over her. Rock collectors have picked from her. I wonder if someone has played a yoyo on the moon..."

Kidlat assigns himself this feat, assembling junk material for the space warfare he calls the Philippine Official Moon Project, or POMP. He uses a discarded bathtub as his space capsule, launching himself with a chicken as co-astronaut off a children's slide. This after he has concluded a series of experiments proving the worth of onion juice as propellent fuel.

The film detours on several instances, as has charmingly marked de Guia's catch-as-catch-can type of film-making. There is a reflective montage sequence on onion towers and domes of Europe and Asia. Filmclips of the first Philippine Soapbox Derby, held in Baguio in 1956 and shot by his mother with herself as participant, are utilized by de Guia to show his early disenchantment with correct technology as against the poetry of being. Designed to make use of pilewood and cones, Kidlat's racer, "Pinecone Fury," wins him the Most Unique trophy, but he loses in the race since "friction proved stronger than beauty..."

Animation is widely used in the ridiculous collage of a film, and a short witty tract on the Virgin of Balian, the Mater Dolorosa, effectively displays Mother Mary as the first astronaut, her cape sheathing a supply of onions which not only fuel her flights, but to which we are also allowed to trace the origin of her teary men.

De Guia's films are the funniest and most enjoyable I've seen in recent years. Their lack of conventional structure and polish are more than mitigated by the effin quality of spirit obviously at work, where found footage is threaded together and given loose directions to turn every which impish way. De Guia has touched that quirky nerve spelling Filipino. His films are indeed of "jerrybuilt assemblage"... technically disconcerting, patchy, momentarily awkward at times... yet extremely engaging with their superb inventiveness, funny, tender, bittersweet, brimming with folk wit and cadence, surprisingly sophisticated in their poetic poses, allusions, and reflective judgments.

If the Western Archimedes pounced on "Eureka!" then stepped out of the bathtub, then we have the Eastern de Guia going about it compulsively counter-clockwise, first picking up his tiny wispy eurekas along a haphazard way, then stepping into a bathtub to launch himself to the moon so he can spin his yoyo and yodel back to earth.

De Guia has also recently completed a 45-minute document of a Hong Kong family, called Yan Ki: Made In Hong Kong, as well as another 45-minute film on the Turumba, both for German television. He has finished an expanded version of the latter film.

The Heritage Art Center is planning to show all the de Guia films sometime this month (January 1982) as alternative cinema concurrent with the big MIFF event. Here is a chance to view the Kidlat Tahimik films, which may never make it to a commercial circuit here, but which have seldom failed to please with their good humor and vibrations, and radically different approach to filmmaking.

— Alfred A. Yuson

Reprinted from Observer magazine, 11 January 1982

FILM Unfree Radicals

By J. Hoberman

For an African Observer. Written and directed by Per Paulo Pasion. At 21
Chinat, January 1, 1981

A TRIBUTE TO LE CHEVALIER DU ST-ANDRE By Leo, the documentary about his work. At the Lounge of Modern Art, January 27.

Ten Best 1980

(1) Siyak Nova (The Color of Pomegranates): Sergei Paradjanov

(2) Kek Lok, a film from G. M. van Hasselt's Kambas Film Company

(3) Every Man for Himself: Jean-Luc Godard

(4) Raaj Jee: Martin Scorsese


(6) Angel Nino: Pal Gabo

(7) Lucifer Rising: Kenneth Anger

(8) The Perfumed Nightmare: Kidlat Tahimik

(9) Dressed To Kill: Brian De Palma

(10) My ground rules exclude films made

Produced by the Information Group
Metropolitan Manila Commission

Brochure Design and Cover by Raul Garcia
JUST OFF THE PRESS
for the 1983 Manila International Film Festival

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
Rafael Ma. Guerrero

READINGS IN
PHILIPPINE
CINEMA

Published by Experimental Cinema of the Philippines

EXPERIENCE AN EXPRESS TRANSIT AT THE EXPRESS TERMINAL.

Long, labourious, slow transits take the pleasure out of flying. But now, when you fly Air France to Paris, you'll enjoy an Express transit at CDG2. There everything is conceived to make the travelling businessman's life easier.

Minimum Connecting Time at the Express Terminal is only 45 minutes, one of the very fastest, making Paris the ideal gateway to 161 cities in 57 countries. Our timetables are studied so that you'll always find a convenient connection.

And if you are staying in France, departures to the regional capitals are in the same Terminal as international arrivals. Times are changing so changing planes. So for efficient transit between enjoyable flights, travel with the French via Paris.

AIR FRANCE
FOR TRANSIT IN PARIS.