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ART BRUSSELS 2025

Roberto Feleo
Gerardo Tan

THE
DRAWING ROOM
CONTEMPORARY ART

Art Brussels 2025

The exhibition is a presentation of Philippine indigeneity and its place in contemporary art, not as artifact, but as fluid and dynamic thought and attitude. Roberto Feleo and Gerardo Tan, artists whose bodies of work explore the multitudes of interpretation and reinterpretation, reveal how we move history along and of what narratives grow and are preserved along this trajectory. By (re)conceptualizing cycles or the cyclical, they were able to make works that suggest art as an object of the world; instead of a freezing of time, it is a nexus that traces overlapping lines of pasts, the present, and futures.

Robert Feleo's *Life and Afterlife* series portray the ancient and still enduring Filipino mythos of the recurrent nature of life and death. Through visual storytelling of folk narratives, the wallbound sculptures depict allegorical places of belief such as the Skyworld, territory of warriors and hunters, and the Downstream, the turf of mortals. The materiality and technique employed in these new works sustain Feleo's commitment to the locality of his practice, as well as situating them in relevant moments of contemporaneity. The utilization of wood, saw dust, and emulsion mix, which he calls *pinalakpak* and is traditionally used by carpenters, has been pursued and perfected to honor process and labor. It is discursive in its potential in world-making as Feleo journeys into the rich terrain of Philippine myths and legends.

Gerardo Tan's *Weaving Sound* demonstrates the materialization of the auditory. It is an extension of his monumental installation titled *Andi Taku e sana, Amung Taku di sana* (*All of us present, this is our gathering*) presented at the Philippine Pavilion of the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022. In the collaborative work, Tan recorded loom sounds in select weaving houses across the Philippine archipelago and co-created notations with renowned musicologist Felicidad A. Prudente for musicians to play. The (re)produced sounds and generated visuals were weaved by Ifugao master-weaver Sammy N. Buhie into distinctive textile designs. To disclose this process, a split-screen video work shows documentations of the audio source and the performance of weaving. The new painting, as a current output of the repeated cycle, is consistent with Tan's studio practice — relational in its production and contemplative in execution.

In both illustrations of the concept of recurrence, the artists assert the subversive process in interpretation and reinterpretation of indigeneity. Having different backgrounds and philosophies in art, Feleo and Tan exemplify the complex and, at times, contradicting contours of art-making. Through this latest presentation, the two bodies of work conspire in mapping the diversity of Filipino imagination. Whether by visualizing myth or materializing sound, the artworks highlight compelling aspects and embodied elements of our archipelago's culture.

Words by Con Cabrera



Ang Kalangitan

Leather varnish, saw dust, white glue on carved wood, 91.4 x 76 cm, 2025

Ang Kalangitan (The Skyworld or Warrior Heaven) is exclusively for the warrior class. Entrance to this world requires agility, a warrior would have to leap into the chewing motion of the jaws of the sky to get to the Skyworld.



Ang Ilog

Leather varnish, saw dust, white glue on carved wood, 91.4 x 76 cm, 2025

Ang Ilog (The River) that borders Banua Mebuyan and the Middle World. Where the dead performs the ritual of Pamalugu (the ritual bathing of the joineries), to ensure the dead never returns to the Middle World.



Dito, ang Langit at ang Banua Mebuyan

Leather varnish, saw dust, white glue on carved wood, 91.4 x 76 cm, 2025

Dito, ang Langit at ang Banua Mebuyan (The Middle World, the Skyworld and Banua Mebuyan). The Middle World, the world as we the living know it, the Skyworld is the afterlife, exclusively for the warrior class and the Banua Mebuyan, the underworld, for the peasants.



Crossing to Gimukodan

Leather varnish, saw dust, white glue on carved wood, 82.8 x 66.5 x 4.5 cm, 2024

The common man's paradise is in the Underworld, reached after crossing the black river.



(Left) **Rendering 4 (South Cotabato - Ifugao Pattern)**

(Right) **Rendering 12 (Metro Manila - Ifugao Pattern)**

Acrylic on canvas mounted on wood (collaboration with Felicidad A. Prudente and Sammy N. Buhie), 109 x 30.5 cm, 2025



Rendering 3 (Metro Manila - Ifugao Pattern)

Acrylic on canvas mounted on wood (collaboration with Felicidad A. Prudente and Sammy N. Buhie), 127 x 91.4 cm, 2025



Rendering 7 (Abra - Ifugao Pattern)

Acrylic on canvas mounted on wood (collaboration
with Felicidad A. Prudente and Sammy N. Buhie),
84 x 46 cm, 2025



(Left) **Rendering 5 (Davao del Sur - Ifugao Pattern)**

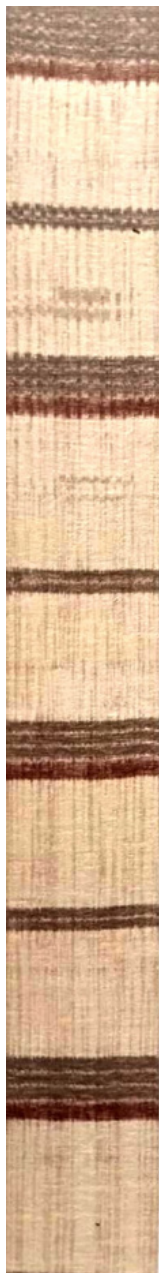
Acrylic on canvas mounted on wood (collaboration with Felicidad A. Prudente and Sammy N. Buhie), 135 x 30.5 cm, 2025

(Right) **Rendering 8 (Maguindanao - Ifugao Pattern)**

Acrylic on canvas mounted on wood (collaboration with Felicidad A. Prudente and Sammy N. Buhie), 117 x 30.5 cm, 2025



Weaving Sound, single-channel video with audio, 4 minutes 51 seconds (collaboration with Felicidad A. Prudente and Sammy N. Buhie), 2025



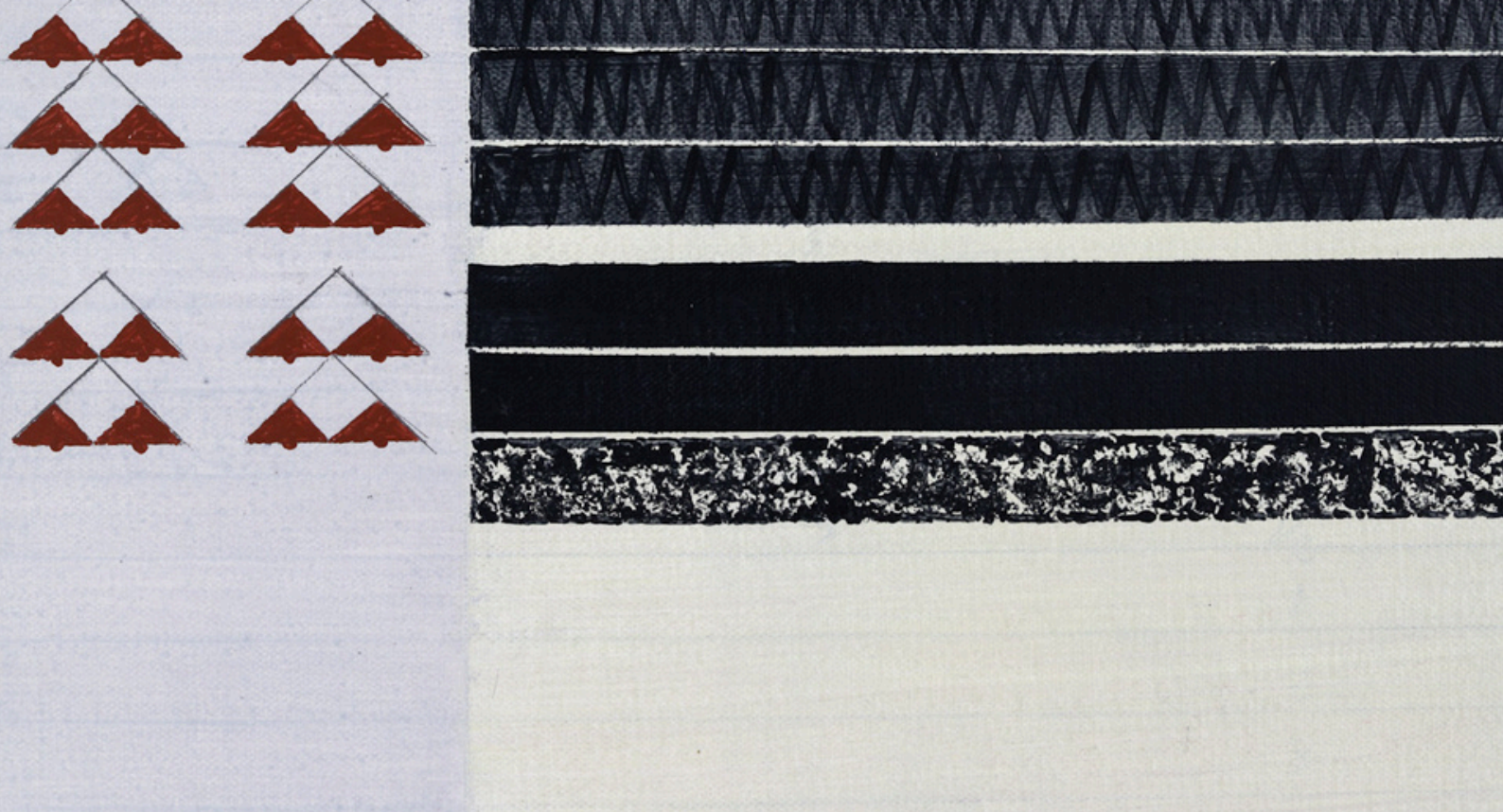
(Left) **Rendering 2 (Kalinga-Ifugao cloth)**, cotton (ikat weaving)
(collaboration with Felicidad A. Prudente and Sammy N. Buhie), 5.41 m x
46 cm, 2025

(Right) **Rendering 4 (South Cotabato- Ifugao)**, cotton (ikat weaving)
(collaboration with Felicidad A. Prudente and Sammy N. Buhie), 7.39 m
x 114 cm, 2025



Rendering 1 (Iloilo - Ifugao Pattern), acrylic on canvas mounted on wood (collaboration with Felicidad A. Prudente and Sammy N. Buhie), 127 x 36 cm, 2025

(On the floor) ***Rendering 1 (Miagao - Ifugao cloth)***, cotton (ikat weaving) (collaboration with Felicidad A. Prudente and Sammy N. Buhie), 11.28 m x 35 cm, 2025



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Roberto B. Feleo (b. 1954) is one of the formidable figures in the Philippine art community today. Throughout almost four decades of artmaking, he has mounted more than a dozen solo exhibitions, two of them outside the Philippines—in Japan's Fukouka Art Museum and in Cuba's Centro Wifredo Lam.

As well, Feleo's works can be seen in public art institutions in the Philippines and abroad. Locally, he is in the permanent collection of the National Museum of the Philippines, the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the University of the Philippines Diliman Vargas Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, and the Bencab Museum, the Hiraya Gallery, the Drawing Room Gallery, and Altro Mondo Creative Space. Overseas, his works are found in the Fukouka Art Museum, Centro Wifredo Lam, the Singapore Art Museum, Asia Pacific Musée National D'Arte Moderne Centre Pompidou.

Ever evolving, Feleo's pieces are focused on the various aspects of being Filipino, such as the nation's history, myths, traditions, and the quaint nuances of a multi-dimensional way of life.

Gerardo Tan, also known as Gerry Tan, is a visual artist, curator, and art educator. He finished Bachelor of Fine Arts, Major in Painting, at the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman College of Fine Arts (CFA) in 1982 and Masters of Fine Arts, Major in Painting, at the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1992 as a Fulbright Fellow. He was a professorial lecturer at UP CFA from 1993 to 2000 and the former dean of the University of the East College of Fine Arts from 2002 to 2005. Tan was awarded the Cultural Center of the Philippines Thirteen Artists Award in 1988.

As a conceptual artist, Tan explores the nature of art and how forms and materiality can be articulated in ideas and concepts, be it through painting, sculpture, found objects, artists books, or installations. Often referencing and revisiting his earlier work, Tan deals with aesthetic questions related to the reproducibility of images and the spatial and temporal authenticity of a work.

Tan has exhibited at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Jorge B. Vargas Museum, Ateneo Art Gallery, Metropolitan Museum of Manila, and Lopez Museum, among many more institutions in the Philippines. He has participated in several international exhibitions such as the 2nd Asian Art Show in Fukuoka Museum, 1982, the 1st Melbourne Biennale, 1999, the 4th Gwangju Biennale, 2002, and the inaugural exhibition of The National Gallery of Singapore, 2016. He continues to work with contemporary artists making up the Bastards of Misrepresentation that is curated by Manuel Ocampo, which has aggressively and independently been exhibiting since 2010 in Berlin, Germany, Queens New York, and Sete, France.

In 2022, his work was featured at the Philippine Pavilion of the 59th Venice Biennale titled Milk of Dreams, curated by Yael Buencamino and Arvin Flores.



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