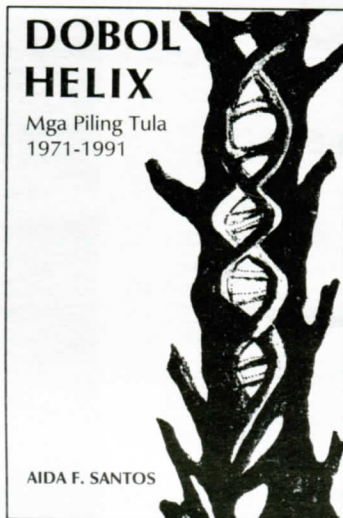


The color of March is purple

Women's Month in the Philippines was a virtual fiesta celebrating the creativity and productivity of our sisters. Following is a partial listing of March's dizzying assortment of activities.



BOOK LAUNCHINGS

A double booklaunching of Aida F. Santos's *Dobol Helix: Mga Piling Tula 1971-1991* (Double Helix, Selected Poems 1971-1991) and Estrella A. Consolacion's *Mga Bagwis ng Pangarap* (The Tender and Delicate Wings of Hope) was held March 22 at the University of the Philippines (UP) Film Center foyer in Diliman, Quezon City, northeast of Manila. The books were published by *Katipunan ng mga Kababaihan para sa Kalayaan* (KALAYAAN or Association of Women for Freedom).

Santos, writer, researcher and teacher, is an advocate of women's rights. She is a founder of KALAYAAN,

GABRIELA, Women Involved in Creating Cultural Alternatives (WICAA), among others.

The late Consolacion was a "child of the First Quarter Storm," the student-activist period of the early '70s, and a feminist. She was also one of the founders of KALAYAAN.

Consolacion died of complications from cancer in 1989.

Flor C. Caagusan edited and translated Consolacion's poems from Filipino to English.



Over at Our Lady's Court in Miriam College, Quezon City, the Women's Resource and Research Center, KALAYAAN, the Institute of Women's Studies, the Institute of Women's Studies Consortium launched three publications March 25. These are: *Springbook: Readings on Women and Society* edited by Marjorie Evasco, Aurora Javate de Dios and Caagusan; *Proceedings of the First Teacher Training (Seminar Workshop on Women's Studies)* edited and introduced by Javate de Dios; and *Ugat (Root)*, poetry by Noemi Alindogan Medina.

EXHIBITS

The group *Kababaihan sa Sining at Bagong Sibol na Kamalayan* (Women for the Arts and a New Consciousness) held its annual exhibition, featuring the works of artists Imelda Cajipe-Endaya,



Brenda Fajardo, Ida Bugayong, Aca Versoza, Charito Bitanga, Veronica Lim-Yuyitung, Sally Carillo, Lisa Perez, Karissa Villa and Paz Abad Santos. The show was held March 8-14 at the Vargas Museum, UP Diliman, Quezon City. The exhibit was sponsored by the UP Department of Art Studies, Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Center and the Women's Coalition.



Artists Vilma Lee, Carol Degelet, Catherine Malaban and Esme de los Reyes had a group show March 21-April 26 at the Institute of Women's Studies, Nursia Building on Estrada St., Malate, Manila.

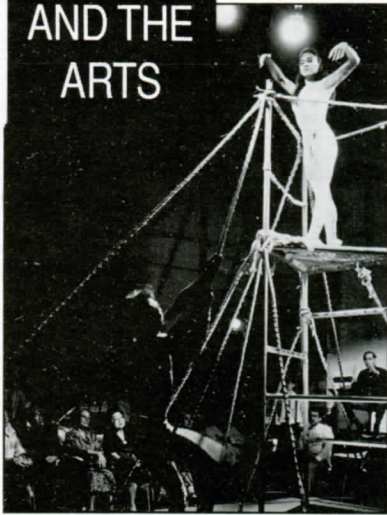
The four artists exhibited portraits, still life and nudes using charcoal or oil on canvas/wood.



"Walong Filipina" (Eight Filipinas), a group exhibit, was held at the Liongoren Art Gallery at 111 New York St., Cubao, Quezon City, March 23-April 16. Oils, fine prints, photographs, ethnic-inspired weavings, trapunto, terra



WOMEN
AND THE
ARTS



Cantata for Daragang Magayon

By MERLINDA C. BOBIS

*"in the mornings,
mayon volcano renders you dumb."*

— a bikolano

daragang magayon,
on this half-light, you stun me.
you repeat a perfect crest,
a once-upheaval caught at its height.
framed against the sky,
a breast heaved and held
with no letting go of breath,
your quiet fury of all ages.
ay, you stretch my eye to your peak
as you would pull my visions sky-high;
you strain me to be bird
this early morning —
how you strain me,
i almost hear me growing wings.

down here, your immense sweep
of bluish-grey-green
becomes briefest in my wonder —

thousands of feet i fly in a handspan,
in one sharp intake of breath
when everything is fast yet still.
i shall know you.

that bluish-grey-green shall loom
a deeper green — trees,
leaves, grass, and dew
on its cheek.
i shall know you
more than breast stunning me
to a flash of wing.

the day moves, and you are capped
with clouds i firmly elbow out.
i monster-green — because i wish you
clearest,

more personal as a lump in the throat
full as this morning
i cannot even gulp —
is this how to choke
in too much beauty
that splinters the eye?
you lift me aching, up there,
a spreading sense of earthlessness
with too much earth!
you stun me bird
startled into possibility of flight,

like knowing its name for the first time.

i soar, lifted — jolted!

but why, up here, you are strangest crest?
hacked by the madness of winds.
why, up close, you stun me more?
i smart with your deep ravines,
your sharp cliffs, your roughest grooves.
are you not perfect breast
or crest of wave?
no flaw? no lack?
something vicious about a wounded
mountain,
a breast that suckled monster teeth —
your name unclasps from memory.
i do not know you
ravaged to the foot.

i can not love you with no name.



Aftersong of Daragang Magayon

lovers are better nameless.

it is enough to suckle sky,
or be skirt spread
unending lawn for all feet —
billowing, seeking all corners,
willing thoroughness for your walking's
sake;
ever earth warming with every surge
of breast holding up heights for you.
a, i am beautiful and clear
only for those below
whose hopeless slumbers
have been greened,
because i have pulled sky-high;
all chance-birds waiting
for first-time flights,
all of you.

but up here,
you can not know me
as fullest crest or breast,
as roost for all fliers,
rest for tired wings —

W O M E N ' S M O N T H C E L E B R A T I O N

you deny me, shun me,
because i am wounded.
do not fret,
my wounds will not wound you.

i have promised all a tenderness.
so rest your youth on me,
and i will sing you
till you come of age,
then set you down,
having learned to be human,
to wing without wings,
because the sky up here
and the earth below
have already loved
in the spirit's depth.
so gather all my wounds in your eyes.
do not blink; do not shrink
from the tremor of lids.
my wounds are not far
from the reddish grooves
running the whiteness
of your eyes.
we are no different —

up here, you shall know me
in the years you dreamt,
those tossing of days
that desired to rise,
in the hit-beat of each minute
that deepened gashes into grooves,
into wounds not mine alone.
do you not know
they live in the tales
we brought to life together?
in the song we sang
again and again — like this:

flight is song
on four winds.
there, where my wounds cut dreams
of tall husbands and fat babies
that never cry,
because they do not die.
there, you sing with me.
i am queen, borne aloft
and leafing in strong breakfast arms
of your every sunrise,
just before coffee,
before the youngest splutters

kisses on his hot, hot rice.
there i make perfect sunnysideups,
yellow of the sun,
enough to make you warm all over
till the night
when you prefer to love me and the moon.

flight is song
on four winds,
all gurgle and boo!
all baby-shrieking at the bath!
there where i wonder,
how smooth my womb after
this noisy thing.
flight is song
on four winds
as i spread me as lawn.
we picnic there,
all our lives,
me, alone with mankind
wounding with this desire —
queueing for the arms
of mothers and wives.

green this tale in your memory,
and find the lives of all who lived.
tomorrow, i will tell you a tale again,
sing for us and sing us again
in every flight till queues
are levelled into tracks;
and even as tracks,
i will still sing you
in the tall cogon grass
that clothe your earthsteps —
cogon grass that barely stirs
even when winds wonder
where you roost.

i will even still this breast
from heaving, because i do not wish
to wake you — i will sing for you
and sing you serenely,
because i do not wish
to give away your tomb in my womb —
i only give it without asking,
without wondering
why you are sleeping here,
here in our conspiracy of dreams.



Merlinda C. Bobis is a member of Women Involved in Creating Cultural Alternatives, a feminist creative writers' group. She is the author of two poetry collections, Rituals and Flight is Song on Four Winds. She taught literature at De La Salle University in Manila before she went to Australia on a scholarship to pursue her doctorate in communication arts. The poems on this spread were interpreted in music, dance and voice at the Cultural Center of the Philippines on March 1 and 2, 1991. The mixed media presentation was produced by the CCP Women's Desk and the Coordinating Center for Dance to mark Women's Month.

cotta jewelry and drawings were created by participating artists Pacita Abad, Remy Boquiren, Ida Bugayong, Anna Fer, Jeannie Javelosa, Charito Bitanga, Lita Puyat and Veronica Lim-Yuyitung.



At the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) on Roxas Boulevard, Manila, a selection of paintings by women artists was showcased at the fourth-floor museum hallway March 1-31. The paintings are part of the CCP's permanent collection of artworks.

The CCP is also honoring the Philippines' first National Artist for Dance, the late Francisca Reyes Aquino. Aquino pioneered in the development of Philippine dance research and folk dance presentations. 1991 has also been declared Francisca Reyes Aquino Commemorative Year.

Meanwhile, an exhibit on the life, works and achievements of Aquino was recently held at the Philippine Normal College in Manila and at UP Diliman. Photographs, books, awards and memorabilia made up the exhibit.



A photo-and-poster exhibit on the theme "The Changing Images of the Filipina" opened March 16 at the Quezon Memorial Circle, Elliptical Road, Quezon City. It was sponsored by several women's groups in coordination with the National Commission on Women.

Also at the Quezon Circle, the Philippine Muslim Women's Association sponsored a month-

long exhibit in March on Muslim women's textile craft.

FILM FESTIVALS

The Concerned Artists of the Philippines' Women's Desk sponsored the Second International Women's Film Festival from March 4 to 8.

Participating countries included the Philippines ("Brutal," directed by Marilou Diaz-Abaya, and "Salome," directed by Laurice Guillen); India ("Parama," written and directed by Aparna Sen); France ("Love at First Sight," directed by Diane Kurys); Canada ("Loyalties," directed by Anne Wheeler); People's Republic of China ("The Season for Love," Wu'er Shana); and the United States ("She-Devil," Susan Seidelman).

All screenings were preceded by documentaries from the United Nations Information Center: "Womanpower: The Hidden Asset" and "Womenpower: International Women's Year Conference."

PLAY

Manuel Puig's play "The Mystery of the Rose Bouquet," with a Filipino translation by Joi Barrios, was staged March 1-3 at the Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero Theater, UP Diliman, Quezon City. Noted cinema actress Gina Alajar and stage veteran Angie Ferro essayed the lead roles. The play was directed by Tony Mabesa and sponsored by Dulaang UP.

LECTURES / SYMPOSIA

Prominent film personalities and academicians participated in a symposium on "Creating an Alternative Image of Women in Cinema" held March 1 at the UP Alumni Center multipurpose hall in Diliman, Quezon City.

Sponsored by the UP Film Center and the Concerned Artists of the Philippines - Women's Desk, the symposium was held in line with the Second International Women's Film Festival.



A cooking demonstration featuring "Filipino Recipes in Times of Crisis" was held March 16 at the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City.



Five hundred government and 500 non-government organizations sponsored a National Women's Congress March 25 at the ballroom of the Philippine Village Hotel in Parañaque, Metro Manila.

A nationwide Women's Prayer for Peace, a joint project of women government and non-government organizations, was held March 1.

Another joint project, "Araw ng Kababaihan" (Women's Day), included a walk for peace, a program, exhibits and booths last March 8 at the Quezon Circle. The Philippine Information Agency also launched its mini-information center at the Circle on the same day.



Product demonstrations (fish, meat, fruits and vegetables, laundry and herbal soaps, vinegar, infant food processing, seed production, compost-making, storage procedures, embroidery, garments-and bag-making) were

held March 6 and 7 at Quezon Circle. Other activities during the two-day affair were a bazaar and rolling stores selling women's products, a case presentation of successful women's programs, projects and leadership, and distribution of seeds. Sponsored by various women's groups.



A rally was held on March 8 at Mendiola, Manila near Malacanang Palace to mark International Women's Day. It was participated in by various women's organizations.



A student conference on women's studies was held last month at the Ateneo de Manila University in Loyola Heights, Quezon City. The sponsoring schools and universities were: Ateneo, De La Salle University, Miriam College, Philippine Women's University, Saint Scholastica's College and UP.



The Philippine Women's University (PWU) and the women's group *Diwa* (which means "thought") recently sponsored a "Gender Sensitivity and Assertion Training" at the PWU campus on Taft Avenue, Manila.

MILESTONE

Adul de Leon (1931-1991), poet-artist and activist, passed away on March 17. She will remain in the memories of those who have known her as a woman warrior.

— compiled by Marie T. Dimapilis