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**A Synthesis Overview of the Contemporary Art Forms and
Performance Practices in the Philippines**

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Abstract

This research article describes and presents an overview of the contemporary art forms and performance practices from the various regions in the Philippines. Visiting contemporary art exhibitions and talking about living artists is an important aspect of appraising the culture of the Philippine arts with awareness and appreciation. This study used a descriptive method to gather information about existing conditions in which the library method and literature review were utilized in gathering and synthesizing the articles and scientific papers related to contemporary Philippine art. The data were analyzed through synthesis information known as explanatory synthesis through the use of eight criteria in analyzing the reviews such as painting and other visual arts, architecture, sculpture and installation, literature, music, dance, cinema, and theater and performance. Conclusion of the results and discussions, contemporary Philippine art encompasses a wide range of art forms and constantly redefines and dismantles traditional categories of arts. Philippine traditional art has always been an integral part of daily life, as well as the dominant and alternative art forms. Its importance endures not only in its aesthetic representation but also in its functionality and its significance to the society that created it. As the dominant, alternative, and traditional art forms may be used in everyday private circumstances, it is encountered more closely and possesses many senses concurrently.

Keywords: art, art forms, contemporary art, Philippine arts, Philippines, practices

Introduction: Contemporary art is the art of today, created by artists who are living in our time as it renders opportunities and possibilities to reflect on society and the issues that are vital to us and the world (Art Education Definitions, 2020). In addition, it is part of a cultural exchange that regards more substantial contextual frameworks such as identity, family, community, and nationality. Visiting contemporary art expositions and discussing living artists is an imperative aspect of appraising and valuing the culture of the Philippine arts with art awareness and art appreciation.

Contemporary art defines the work of artists who are living in the 21st century (Art21, 2020). Contemporary art mirrors contemporary culture and society, offering a rich resource to consider current ideas and rethink the familiar. The work of contemporary artists is a dynamic succession of concepts, methods, materials, and subjects that confront traditional barriers and defy simple definition. In this context, diverse and eclectic, contemporary art is characterized by the very lack of an identical organizing ideology or principle. In a technologically advancing, culturally diverse, and globally influenced environment, contemporary artists give voice to the changing and varied cultural landscape of beliefs, values, and identities.

In this instance, this research article aimed to describe and present an overview of the contemporary art forms and performance practices from the various regions in the Philippines. Defining an artwork, particularly if it is in the contemporary style, demands knowledge of art: its principles, scope, and production and perception of the artist and the determinants that influence art-making. Because numerous contemporary artists counteract to issues and concerns in society, it also helps to understand the community and conditions in which the artist creates art (Ramirez, 2016). Curiosity, dialogue, and openness are the most prominent tools for interlocking with works of art. Alternatively, examining whether an artwork is good or bad, the study of contemporary art challenges an inquiry-based approach and an open-ended process. Probing questions that enkindle dialogue and stimulate debate is an essential first step toward appreciating, interpreting, and evaluating works of art that can challenge expectations, may stimulate influential responses, or oppose personal dogmas or societal implications.

Literature Review

Modern Art: Art has reflected life in the community, society, and the world in all its forms, lines, colors, and shapes in all of human antiquity. The same has been real in the last two centuries, with world affairs and global trends being displayed in the movements of art. The decades from 1900 to the present have witnessed the human race prevailing on an ever-shrinking planet. The 20th century is regarded as a blast in the exchange of beliefs, ideas, values, and lifestyles that advances to induce the citizens of the world closer contemporaneously (Sunico, 2015).

Environmental, Political, and Social Changes: There has been a movement across the globe, supporting different languages, cultures, skills, and even physical attributes of various races to blend like never before. The 20th century also languished through two World Wars, and numerous regional conflicts in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. There was the Great Depression of the 1930s and the Asian economic crisis of the 1990s. Deemed the modern-day epidemic, AIDS has tormented millions the world over, while millions more remain to live in disease, hunger, and poverty. Environmental devastation has also shifted a major concern.

Philippine's Contexts: In the Philippines, technological advancements remain to be a primary driving force in the areas that each of these art forms has taken. Among the outcomes have been impressive innovations and variations in materials manipulation,

coloring techniques, embellishment methods, and creation processes employed to all media of today—whether physical, tangible, virtual, or implicit in cyberspace. These have equipped amazingly innovative art forms to emerge far beyond conventional architecture, painting, and sculpture. As swiftly as technology can generate new techniques and devices, modern artists conform to them to intensify their creative expression and invention. The modern trends and techniques in digital media, film, photography, print media, and industrial or product design, not only have brought Philippine artistry and workmanship to the world's attention, but they have initiated an entire spectrum of opportunities for young and growing Filipinos to improve and utilize these skills and talents.

Methodology:

Research Design: This study used a descriptive method to collect information about subsisting conditions (Subong, Jr., 2005). Creswell (2009) distinguishes descriptive research as requiring the collection of data to respond to questions concerning the prevailing situation of the subject of the study. In this research design, the literature review (Tabuena, 2020) and library method (Sappe, 2020) were employed in accumulating and synthesizing the reports and scientific expositions related to the contemporary art forms and performance practices from the various regions in the Philippines.

Data Gathering Procedure: Based on the literature review process, the researcher distinguished three comparative views on the contemporary art forms and performance practices from the various regions in the Philippines: (1) dominant (mainstream), (2) alternative, and (3) traditional (indigenous). The researcher applied eight criteria in analyzing reviews such as painting and other visual arts, architecture, sculpture and installation, literature, music, dance, cinema, theater and performance.

Data Analysis: The data were analyzed through synthesis information (Murray, 2006) known as explanatory synthesis, a written discussion that carries on one or more sources then divide the subject into its components parts and present them to the reader in a clear and orderly manner, through the used of eight criteria in analyzing the reviews such as the following: (1) painting and other visual arts, (2) architecture, (3) sculpture and installation, (4) literature, (5) music, (6) dance, (7) cinema, (8) theater and performance. This process also illustrates previously published and reported significant results that investigate the same phenomenon, known as a meta-analysis, the evaluation of the outcome of different data components and methodologies on the described results (Stanley, 2001; Zeng et al., 2014; Aburayya et al., 2020).

Results and Discussion:

Characteristics of the Philippine Contemporary Arts: Audiences act a vital function in the process of meaning construction regarding works of art. Some artists say that the observer contributes to the artwork by extending his experiences, interpretations, reflections, and opinions. Contemporary Philippine Art is a 21st-century art created by

Filipino artists originating from the different regions in the Philippines reflecting technological progression and cultural diversity.

The following are the general characteristics of the Philippine contemporary arts by classification: (a) dominant (mainstream), it is a foreign-influenced, industry-driven, technology-assisted arts-oriented for mass-consumption (e.g. Sarah Geronimo, Ogie Alcasid); (b) alternative, It is usually social realist or advocacy-oriented either individual (e.g. Joey Ayala, Kidlat Tahimik, Grace Nono) or collectives (as artist groups) - interdisciplinary and practices (e.g. Ugatlahi Artist Collective, Gerilya, Sipat Lawin Ensemble); and (c) traditional (indigenous), it preserves local traditions (e.g. GAMABA - Gawad sa Manlilikha ng Bayan, awardees like Lang Dulay, Samaon Sulaiman).

Contemporary Art Forms and Practices from the Regions in the Philippines:

Contemporary art ascertains its roots to the developments in the early 1900s, with economic and social developments brought about by American colonialism, as well as the entry of new technology into the Philippines. These changes gave rise to new ways of expression as well as the transformation of traditional art forms. The Information Age has a notable impact on contemporary art as it enables the emergence of a wide array of art forms and styles, gives rise to new concepts in art, and introduces a higher level of interactivity in the creation and experience of art (Lico et al., 2018).

Contemporary art encompasses a wide range of art forms and constantly redefines and dismantles traditional categories of arts (Lico et al., 2018). Art is classified into the following broad categories: fine art, popular art, and craft. Based on medium, art is classified into visual arts, architecture, music, dance, theater, photography, cinema, broadcast art, digital art, and installation. Other forms of art include sculpture, literature, and printmaking.

Painting and Other Visual Arts: Painting refers to the application of color, pigment, or paint to a surface (canvas, metal, paper, walls, or wood) applying customary painting mediums (acrylic, oil, and watercolor). Contemporary Philippine visual arts consist of indigenous art and studio art. The art throughout the regions is distinguished as a vast array of forms and styles, seeking inspiration from cultural or social issues, local customs or traditions, indigenous cultures, and established fine art forms. In the Philippines, a more innovative set of artists further stimulated artistic conventions and introduced new advances and approaches to the subject matter. Remarkable of the works are social commentaries skillfully portrayed by the juxtaposition of contemporary and historical imageries. Social realism, which drifted on protest issues and themes in alternative art, also emerged as a powerful genre in the latter half of the 20th century (Cerbo, et al., 2010).

Architecture: Architecture refers to the art and science of planning, designing, and forming buildings and other constructions or structures. Contemporary Philippine architecture displays the evolution of purpose and style in the construction of numerous structures. Notable styles in contemporary Philippine architecture include alternative

architecture, deconstructivism, green architecture, high-tech, neovernacular, and postmodernism techniques. In the post-war years, the new Philippine government was covered with the reconstruction and rehabilitation of buildings damaged during the war. The Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) was built in Manila in the seventies. The modernity of design and method of construction, as observed in dominant (mainstream) art, was manifest in most structures, such as those found in Quezon City, Makati, and Manila.

Sculpture and Installation: The sculpture is a three-dimensional artwork that maybe through diverse methods (ranging from traditional, alternative, and dominant art), such as assembling, carving, casting, or modeling. Comparable to sculpture is a relatively new art form termed installation described as art that is or has been installed or arranged in a location or certain position, designed to transform the perception and discernment of a particular space. With the rise of modernism and innovation in the Philippines, Napoleon Abueva was soon followed by emerging artists who deliberately explored materials and styles used in sculpture (e.g. hardwood, metals, plastics).

Literature: Literature is the art of written works. The word literature translates literally as “acquaintance with letters”. The country went through various scenes, sometimes tempestuous, and these are reflected in Philippine literature. The 1970s marked social unrest and the declaration of Martial Law abridged the freedom of expression and the press. Writers, however, did not quit writing. They wrote of the Marcos and the post-Marcos era and the Filipino people’s aspirations and desires as reflected in social realism (alternative art).

Music: Music is an artistic form of auditory communication incorporating instrumental or vocal tones in a structured and continuous manner. It is also defined as any pleasing and harmonious sound produced by singers or musical instruments. Philippine music flourished during the Contemporary period. Also known as Pinoy pop, it covers a variety of forms: ballads, dance tunes, Broadway-inspired songs, disco, folk songs, jazz fusion, rap, rock n roll, and its variants. Contemporary Philippine music is distinguished as the establishment of native applications and the integration of traditional, alternative, and mainstream music with movement elements and visual rudiments.

Dance: Dance is a medium for personal creativity, including expressing oneself in a free, guided, spontaneous, or structured movement, demonstrating one’s individuality and uniqueness. After the American Occupation, the 1940s and 1950s testified not just the actual socio-political liberation of the Philippines but also the transformation of native cultural art and traditions from mere apprenticeship to incorporation and fusion of Filipino expressions and sensibilities with world culture. Some of the dances include ballet, breakdance, hip-hop, and jazz dance. Contemporary Philippine dance was inspired by the contemporary dance in the West. Later developments in Philippine dance brought about new stylistic approaches and ideological modes that incorporate movements in indigenous dances and innovative movements. There is an evident development from

traditional to popular (mainstream) dance (art).

Cinema: Contemporary Philippine cinema emerged after the Martial Law Period. The independent film movement employed current technology in film. The rise of digital film technology-empowered a new generation of filmmakers to explore and search for innovative themes and experiment with form and style. The contemporary film has also brought to light regional languages and segments of the population whose concerns and interests would not have otherwise been concentrated on by mainstream (dominant) cinema.

Theater and Performance: The theater is an art form that expresses the emotions and ideas of the artist/s. It combines all the other aforementioned art forms. It makes use of dramatic literature for the script; architecture, painting, sculpture, and its related arts for set design; and music for setting the mood of the audience. Because of this, it is acknowledged as the most complex of all the art forms thus the title: "The Queen of the Arts". In the 1960s, the theater commenced employing vernacular, focusing on societal concerns and issues. Other related art includes cinema and film production. Contemporary theater and performance in the Philippines are described by multi-art performances, an integrated arts approach, improvisation, and the use of local literary traditions to interpret social reality. In this circumstance, alternative art is a more focused characteristic as portrayed to social realism.

Conclusion: Contemporary Philippine art encompasses a wide range of art forms and constantly redefines and dismantles traditional categories of arts (Lico, et al., 2018). Some artists believe that the person is influenced by language, social connections, and the unconscious. They believe they are inadequate to affect change. Another group of artists who call themselves structuralists, consider that a phenomenon can be interpreted in relation to other phenomena. Some codes and signs hold these phenomena so the work of the artist is to make these visible. They attempt objectivity (as oppose to subjectivity), coherence, and rigor established by science and theories. They search for universal truth and believe in unchanging human nature (Ramirez, 2016). Philippine traditional art has always been an integral part of daily life, as well as the dominant and alternative art forms. Its importance endures not only in its aesthetic representation but also in its functionality and its significance to the society that created it. As the dominant, alternative and traditional art forms may be used in everyday private circumstances, it is encountered more closely and possesses many senses at the same time. The senses of smell, taste, and touch are interlocked along with visual discernment and sense.

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