

# 40 Other Important Filipino Visual Artists Who Are Not Yet National Artists

Words by FRANZ SORILLA IV

November 11, 2022



The Order of National Artists conferred its 2022 roster last June but surprisingly, there was no one praised for contributions to the visual arts scene. We list down other important Filipino artists that people should remember:



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The Order of National Artists has conferred many of our nation's pride in terms of sculpture, painting, illustrations, and other forms of visual arts. However, for 2022, not a single visual artist has received it.



their distinctive style, enduring legacy and impact on the Philippine art scene today.

## I. Luis "Junyee" Yee Jr



ABOVE "Kwarantín", a temporary outdoor installation in 2020 at the University of the Philippines Diliman campus inspired by Junyee's "Bridges" from 2018 installed at the Front Lawn / UP Vargas Museum Facebook page



ABOVE "Open Doors" monument (2009) located at Tel Aviv, Israel / Israel Preker (from [streetsigns.co.il](http://streetsigns.co.il))



ABOVE "Wood Things" (1981), photo taken at the retrospective exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila in 2013 / [artandmarket.net](http://artandmarket.net)

Known as the Father of Installation Art in the country, Mindanaoan artist Junyee received the highest distinction from the Cultural Center of the Philippines last 2020 for his influential career in the visual art scene spanning 50 years.

Read also: [In Conversation With Junyee: The Father of Installation Art in the Philippines](#)



*"Kapatiran ng Lakambining May Bahay" redux. Recreated from the Metropolitan Museum of Manila's exhibition for Cajipe-Endaya's retrospective at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (Photo: Franz Sorilla IV)*

Photo 1 of 2

Distinguished Filipina painter, printmaker, writer, and researcher, Cajipe-Endaya has just mounted her first-ever retrospective exhibition at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP). Born and raised in Paete, Laguna, the core of her works reside in our pursuit of Filipino identity, the struggles and successes of Filipina women in this modern age, and the power of the people—the oppressed and the marginalised.

Cajipe-Endaya is a recipient of the Gawad CCP Para sa Sining in 1990 and the CCP Centennial Honor for the Arts in 1998.

### 3. Tony Velasquez



The creator of the iconic Filipino comic character, Kenkoy, was a renowned illustrator who later became known as the Father of Tagalog comics. He worked for Don Ramon Roces' publications and advertising company. Through this, he shaped how the masses of their time consume advertisements and illustrations, eventually including Philippine comic books.

Velasquez was a recipient of the Gawad CCP Para sa Sining in 1993.

Read also: [The Leading Men of Philippine Arts](#)

## 4. Mauro Malang Santos



ABOVE "Yellow Vendor", 1985, acrylic on canvas, 91 x 91 cm (Photo: Salcedo Auctions)



ABOVE "Untitled", 1963, ink on paper, 40.5 x 28 cm (Photo: Salcedo Auctions)

English comic strip in a Philippine publication), he later became known as prolific painter and printmaker.

Malang was a recipient of the Gawad CCP Para sa Sining in 1995.

*Read also: [Remembering Malang](#)*

## 5. Lao Lianben



ABOVE A huge Lao Lian Bien painting stands in the foyer, next to an Ifugao bulul (Photo: Tatler Philippines Homes Volume 24)

With works commonly associated with the spirit and aesthetics of Zen, this Filipino visual artist is perhaps the first to introduce the use of found objects and indigenous materials in an assemblage. His contemporaries Gus Albor and Rock Drilon, and the rest of their artist group Remedios Circle, are also important stalwart figures in the Philippine art scene that everybody should know.

## 6. Santiago Bose





This mixed media artist co-founded Baguio Arts Guild and was known for his distinct use of indigenous media like bamboo and volcanic ash. Addressing difficult social and political issues through his art, the flourishing of the art scene in the Cordillera region is credited to Bose and his contemporaries.

Bose was a recipient of the Gawad CCP Para sa Sining in 2004.

## 7. Brenda Fajardo



ABOVE "Iniwan ni Kulas si Kulasa Dahil Mayroon Siyang Kulasisi", 2018, coloured ink on paper, 12 x 18 in (Photo: Tin-Aw Art Gallery)



ABOVE "Ayaw niya Kay Leila, Leni, at Ma. Lourdes, Bakit?", 2018, coloured ink on paper, 12 x 18 in (Photo: Tin-Aw Art Gallery)



ABOVE "Baraha ng Pilipino 3", 2018, coloured ink on paper, 12 x 18 in (Photo: Tin-Aw Art Gallery)

One of the pioneers of the Philippine Educational Theater Association, Fajardo channels into her art the aesthetics of poverty and the art of the people. She has exhibited extensively locally and internationally, and, with Cajipe-Endaya, is one of the promoters of Philippine feminist art.

Fajardo is a recipient of the CCP Centennial Honor for the arts in 1998 and the Gawad CCP Para sa Sining in 2012.

## 8. Nena Saguil



ABOVE "Untitled", 1976, watercolour on paper, 58.5 x 61.5 cm (Photo: Salcedo Auctions)

Renowned abstractionist Saguil had her works mainly themed around geometric shapes to symbolise the universe. Her works reflect her interest in mysticism and often experiment between cubism, impressionism, and surrealism art movements.

## 9. Roberto Chabet



*"Blind Window", 1964, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in (Photo: Asian Cultural Council - Philippines)*

Photo 1 of 2

Aside from being the curator and founding museum director of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Chabet was known to be the Father of Conceptual Art in the country and impacted many generations of artists, art teachers, critics, and cultural workers. He played an important role in the emergence of contemporary art in the country.

Chabet was a recipient of the CCP Centennial Honor for the Arts in 1998 and the Gawad CCP Para sa Sining in 2015.

## 10. Romulo Olazo





*"Diaphanous B-LXLVII", 1989, oil on canvas, 58 x 88 in (Photo: romuloolazo.com)*

Photo 1 of 2

Olazo was an accomplished painter and printmaker, with significant contributions to abstract art. His achievements in technique and substance are evident in his *Diaphanous* and *Permutation* series which have made great waves among critics and collectors here and abroad.

## 11. Anita Magsaysay-Ho



ABOVE Self-portrait of Anita Magsaysay-Ho, 1944, oil on bristol board (Photo: Tatler Philippines)

This Filipina painter specialised in social realism and post-Cubism, making her the only female member of the legendary artist group "Thirteen Moderns" in the '50s who were the pioneers and shapers of modernism in the country. Her works have broken records in auction houses even up to this day.

*In case you missed it: [A Look Back at Anita Magsaysay Ho: Her Life, Art, and Philosophies](#)*

## 12. Nestor Leynes

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ABOVE "Untitled (Mother and Child)", 1988, mixed media, 36.5 x 24.5 cm (Photo: Salcedo Auctions)

A student of Fernando Amorsolo, Leynes helped develop the painting in a hyperrealistic style here in the country. He also worked in comics and advertising and later went painting full-time at the age of 58 until his retirement. He was regarded as one of the leaders of the "Magic Realist" painters in the country.

## 13. Pacita Abad



ABOVE "Hundred Islands", 1989 (Photo: Museum of Contemporary Art and Design for Tatler Philippines)

Hailing from Batanes, Abad was also one of the essential Filipina artists. She travelled the world exhibiting her works of distinct ink-brush painting techniques, batik, tie-dying, and other traditional art forms. In her quilting method trapunto, she used mixed media like stones, sequins, glass, buttons, and many more, and layered them on painted canvas.

She became the first woman to be awarded the prestigious Ten Outstanding Young Men of the Philippines in 1984.

## 14. Agnes Arellano



*Agnes Arellano (Photo: agnesarellano.com)*

Photo 1 of 2

Arellano is known for her mythical, surrealist, and erotic works in plaster, wood, and other materials. This renowned sculptor continues to make her mark through exhibitions locally and internationally, channelling the Sacred Feminine in her many works that are often accompanied by her original poems and musical compositions as well as by writings by other authors. She is the founder and president of the Pinaglabanan Galleries in San Juan.

*Read also: [In Conversation with Agnes Arellano](#)*

## 15. Oscar Villamiel





*"Cheap Medicine", 2019, coconut shells balancing on bamboo poles with hair of abaca fibre (Photo: Art Fair Philippines / Facebook)*

Photo 1 of 2

Villamiel's mixed media installation titled "Payatas" was shown at the 2013 Singapore Biennale, which had the eyes of art critics all over the world on him and his art at the time. Villamiel is known to be one of the shapers of the contemporary art scene in the country, with immense installations made through collecting discarded objects and addressing the urgent issues brought upon by the government's negligence and the impacts of deforestation.

## 16. Julie Lluch



ABOVE Julie Lluch (Photo: Imahica Art Gallery)

One of the most prolific female artists of her generation, Lluch is known for her life-sized sculptural works in terracotta, stone, ceramic, and bronze that present her commentaries on the relationship between the sexes. One of the enduring feminist artists in the country, Lluch is surprisingly a self-taught sculptor.

## 17. Araceli Limcaco-Dans

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ABOVE "Callado", 1992, watercolour on paper (Photo: Salcedo Auctions)

Another student of Amorsolo, Dans has a fruitful artistic career spanning 80 years behind her. Deemed one of the most important living artists, her works include exquisitely detailed still-life paintings in oil, watercolour, and acrylic. She also pioneered the *calado* painting, where lacy pineapple or banana fabric is artfully embroidered on her canvases.

Dans is a recipient of the CCP Centennial Honor for the Arts in 1998.

## 18. Ray Albano



ABOVE Installation photo of Patrick Flores's section "Raymundo Albano: Texts" in the exhibition "Place of Region in the Contemporary" (2017). Photo courtesy the Jorge B. Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Center

Artist, writer, and curator, Albano's contributions to the Philippine art scene were essential to the development of experimental tendencies in mounting exhibitions. He curated "A Decade of Developmental Art", for the Cultural Center of the Philippines' 10th anniversary, which tackled developmental goals and achievements of

Read also: [Inside a Curator's Mind: Dr Patrick Flores on What the Philippine Art Scene Needs Today](#)

## 19. Nunelucio Alvarado



ABOVE Photo: Candy Nagrampa / Art Fair Philippines Facebook page

This internationally acclaimed artist was one of the most important creative forces to emerge in the artistic islands of Negros. In 1997 and 1999, he was awarded Grand Prize of the Philip Morris Philippine Art Awards and in 1992 received the 13 Artists Award from the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila. His works chronicled the life of the *sacadas*, at the height of the social injustices towards these sugarcane farmers in the '70s.

## 20. Eduardo Castrillo





ABOVE: Daniel Go / Flickr

their historical themes.

ve seen the masterful sculptures of Eduardo De Los Santos of sculpture in the country. His main medium was metal. And aside from being well-composed with his subjects' blockings, his works would evoke nationalistic pride due to

## 21. Fil De La Cruz



ABOVE "Diwata: Punla", 2018, oil on canvas, 152 x 183 cm (Photo: The Manila Hotel / Facebook)

Esteemed painter and printmaker, De La Cruz specialises in mezzotint prints, a different printmaking process that doesn't use dot-based techniques. His works are known to have ethnic imageries and indigenous symbols, as well as influences from regional myths and folklore. He is a former president of the Association of Pinoyprintmakers (formerly known as the Philippine Association of Printmakers).

Read also: [Papemelroti's Robert Alejandro on His Artistic Journey, Battling Cancer, and Embracing Life](#)

## 22. Danilo Dalena

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ABOVE "Naninilip" (2000), oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in (Photo: León Gallery / Facebook)

This visual artist used to be a political cartoonist for the *Philippines Free Press* and *Asia Philippine Leader*. In the early years of his career, he was influenced heavily by social realism and impressionism, making his works evident commentaries on the socio-political conditions of the '70s while merely depicting daily life scenes.

## 23. Edgar Fernandez



ABOVE Edgar Fernandez with his painting "Birhen sa Balintawak" behind him (Photo: Iglesia Filipina Independiente National Cathedral)

This social realist painter was one of the vocal Filipino artists during the Martial Law period. In fact, he is the founding member of the Concerned Artists of the Philippines and was widely known for his murals depicting the inhuman condition of the oppressed and the poor. But also, his oeuvre through the years includes his varying takes on "*Inang Bayan*" and "*Madonna*" motifs.



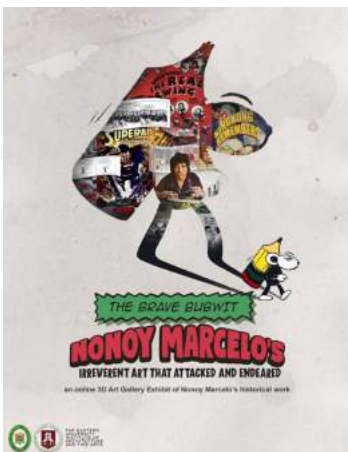
ABOVE Ramon Orlina with one of his most popular glass sculptures of the Virgin Mary (Photo: Tatler Philippines)

This contemporary glass sculptor has been tirelessly taming glass and metal throughout his decades-long career, exploring possibilities of abstraction in every exhibition. Highly respected in art circles, Orlina invites everyone to his one-of-a-kind museum in Tagaytay.

In 2006, he was awarded The Outstanding Filipino (TOFIL) Award. In 2012, he received the Gold Medal of Merit Award bestowed by the Philippine Institute of Architects.

Read also: [\*The Glass Tamer: Ramon Orlina\*](#)

## 25. Nonoy Marcelo



ABOVE Retrospective exhibition of the art of cartoonist Nonoy Marcelo, mounted by his alma mater, the Far Eastern University



pride of the Far Eastern University even used Alfredo Roces, former dean of the said institution, as his model for Tisoy, an iconic character adapted to the screen by National Artist Ishmael Bernal. Marcelo used the comic strip platform to resonate the turbulent period of the '70s up to the 2000s, by caricaturing political figures especially Presidents. He received accolades for his notable contribution to print journalism.

Marcelo was the sole cartoonist to receive the CCP Centennial Honor for the Arts in 1998.

## 26. Eduardo Masferré



ABOVE People of the Philippine Cordillera 1934 - 1956 (published 1988) | (Photo: Courtesy of [www.alchetron.com](http://www.alchetron.com))

This Filipino-Catalan photographer was born in Sagada in Mountain Province. Coming from this region, his works have been heavily focused on documentary reports about the life of the natives of the Cordillera. He was best known for his book, *People of the Philippine Cordillera: Photographs 1934-1956*, which was published in 1988. It included his internationally recognised photographs which were exhibited in Manila, Copenhagen, and Tokyo, some now taken care of by esteemed museum institutions today.

Masferré was a recipient of the CCP Centennial Honor for the Arts in 1998.

## 27. David Medalla



*"Bacchus Asleep" (Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Manila)*

Photo 1 of 2

An internationally acclaimed painter, sculptor, performance artist, and poet, Medalla was distinctly a Filipino artist who was also a "person of the world". He merged physics and poetry in his immense body of works that also include kinetic art. He had either performed, mounted exhibitions, given lectures, or nurtured the rise of the art scenes, not only in Manila but also in Paris, Kassel, London, New York, Sorbonne, Vancouver, and many more. He was the founder and director of the London Biennale in 1998. At the 57th Venice Biennale, Christine Macel curated his seminal work *A Stitch in Time*, which was a long string of fabric in the Pavilion of the Common where all artists and visitors can participate.

## 28. Galo Ocampo



ABOVE "Untitled (Winnowing Rice)", 1975, oil on canvas, 58.4 x 44.5 cm (Photo: Salcedo Auctions)

Many people are familiar with the works of National Artist Hernando R Ocampo but his contemporary Galo was equally important. Unfortunately, he worked mainly for the government that perhaps curtailed him from taking risks. Galo was the director of the National Museum, later the Presidential Museum in Malacañang, and designed the Republic of the Philippines' heraldry and seals. Other than that, being one of the shapers of modernism in the country, he was known for his "Brown Madonna" motif.

## 29. Rodolfo Paras-Perez



ABOVE From the "Florante at Laura" series, woodblock prints (Photo: León Gallery)

Acclaimed graphic artist, art historian, printmaker, and critic, Paras-Perez has been a respected figure in the local art scene even up to this day. He wrote scholarly books and publications for many of the country's revered visual artists and developed art criticism as well. He mounted exhibitions of his woodblock prints and paintings in Manila, Geneva, Krakow, and Florence, and won awards in the '60s.

Read also: [Juvenal Sansó: Master of Visual Artistry](#)

## 30. Justin "Tiny" Nuyda



ABOVE "Search Mindscape Series", oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in (Photo: Galerie Stephanie)

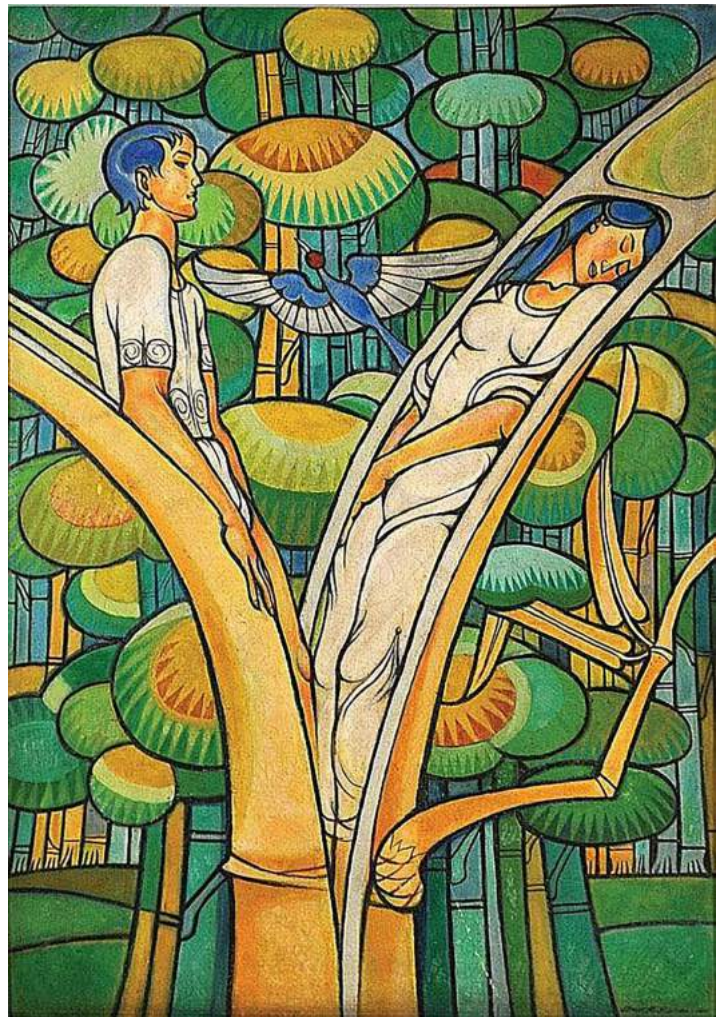


command of colours, luminosity, and radiance bring out a sophisticated and spiritual approach to the beauty of the physical world. His alluring landscapes give us a glimpse of how he saw the world, evoking an impressionistic and otherworldly rendition of abstract art.

## 31. Cenon Rivera



ABOVE "Mother and Child", 1956, oil on canvas (Photo: León Gallery)



ABOVE "Malakas at Maganda", 1965, acrylic on canvas (Photo: León Gallery)



making. Known for the captivating stained glass murals of the Mt Samat National Shrine in Bataan and some panels in the Immaculate Conception Cathedral of Pasig, his mastery can also be seen in his paintings and prints.

## 32. Alfredo Roces



*"We Who Are About To Die", 1976, collection of Bangko Central ng Pilipinas (Photo: Alfredo Roces' Facebook profile)*

Photo 1 of 2

One of the country's most prominent artists, Roces explored from one artistic movement to another until he became more known for abstract expressionism and assemblage. Not to be confused with the National Artist for Literature Alejandro Roces, he also wrote many art books, describing and analysing the works of the country's renowned visual artists. He was also essential to the formation of the esteemed Saturday Group of artists that just celebrated its 50th year with a retrospective exhibition.

## 33. Manuel Rodriguez Sr



ABOVE "Boy on Carabao", circa 1950s, etching on paper, 20.9 x 16 cm (Photo: Salcedo Auctions)

Regarded as the Father of Philippine Printmaking, Rodriguez was not only a pioneer of the said visual art practice but was also the first Filipino to exhibit prints abroad. In 1968, he established the Philippine Association of Printmakers, which is now known as the Association of Pinoyprintmakers.

Rodriguez was a recipient of the CCP Centennial Honor for the Arts in 1998.

## 34. Solomon Sapid



"Gomburza statue" (Photo: Vyacheslav Argenberg / Wikimedia Commons)

Photo 1 of 2

This multi-awarded sculptor was best known for his *Tikbalang*, *GomBurZa*, *Mag-Ina* series, and many more. His sculptures, as Roces once put it, "has a kinetic quality to it. . . a sense of arrested action. He refers to it as 'frozen motion'." Sapid's body of work ranges from mythical to historical to religious subjects, with each one evoking deep-seated emotions and reflecting relevant social situations.

## 35. Tam Austria



ABOVE "Untitled", 2008, oil on canvas, (Photo: Salcedo Auctions)

Another one of the most sought-after artists by collectors is Austria, born and raised in Rizal province and one of the influential artists in Tanay who pushed its art scene forward. In his body of work, he has explored themes ranging from local myths and legends, mother and child, the peasant folk, their customs and traditions, and the rural landscapes.

Read also: [Inday Reyes-Cadapan: Art Imitating Not Only Reality But Also Aspirations](#)

## 36. Charlie Co



ABOVE "Travel Time", 2015, acrylic on canvas and wood; 44" x 44" (Photo: Tatler Philippines)

one of the founding members of Black Artists of Asia, a Bacolod-based group of artists instrumental to the growth of artist communities in the Visayas. With businessman Victor Benjamin Lopue, he founded Orange Gallery which has become a haven for emerging contemporary artists in Bacolod.

## 37. Romulo Galicano



*"Song of the Serene Lake", oil painting, 12 x 16 in (Photo: Portrait Artists Society of the Philippines)*

Photo 1 of 2

Another multi-awarded artist who is not only known for his mastery of technique but also for philosophy, Galicano is one of the most important artists of Cebu who made a mark internationally. Galicano founded and chairs the Portrait Artists Society of the Philippines, which pursues the revival and flourishing of the practice of traditional portraiture and figurative art.

## 38. Manuel Baldemor





Sculptor, printmaker, illustrator, painter, writer—this multi-hyphenate and revered artist from Paete is known worldwide, thanks to his collaboration with UNICEF which distributed greeting cards he created. But more than that, Baldemor has always been an indomitable figure in Philippine art for his award-winning works, and artist-in-residence grants to more than 50 countries. His works depict idyllic scenes with folk art characters in simplified geometric forms, inspired by his hometown, its people, and daily Filipino life.

## 39. Norma Belleza



ABOVE "Filipiniana", 2022, acrylic on canvas, 24 x 61 in (Photo: Galerie Joaquin)

Renowned Filipino painter whose early works are explorations of dark and depressing themes, Belleza is married to fellow artist Angelito Antonio, and together they produce wondrous art in bright colours. Belleza's works depict folk elements like women vendors, potters, and workers. She is known for her romantic sensibility in still life and emphasis on the physical strength of her subjects.

## 40. Angelito Antonio



ABOVE "Defiant Reflections", oil on canvas, 40 x 36 (Photo: Galerie Joaquin)

Antonio belongs to the second generation of Neo-Realists and has works that depict mostly women performing domestic, maternal, industrial, agricultural, and entrepreneurial chores. Antonio's style captures influences from Manansala and Picasso but his own take on abstraction and modern expressionism has made him known as one of the remaining pillars of Modernism in the country.

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*Words* (SOURCES) CULTURAL CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES (GAWAD CCP PARA SA SINING AND CENTENNIAL HONORS FOR THE ARTS), NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS, ATENEO ART GALLERY, SILVERLENS, LEÓN GALLERY, SALCEDO AUCTIONS

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*Words by* HEIDI YEUNG | November 13, 2022

