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PH art 2025 cheat sheet: Who to watch out for, global potential, and more

BY LALA SINGIAN ([HTTPS://LIFESTYLE.INQUIRER.NET/BYLINE/LALA-SINGIAN/](https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/byline/lala-singian/))

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Emmanuel Garibay's work at Art Fair PH 2025. Photos by JT Fernandez

In a digital roundtable, AWITA forecasts Filipino artists emerging in major international events

While the word “awita” has a lyrical, almost Spanish ring to it as well as reminiscent of the Filipino term for song, the word is actually the name of a London-founded nonprofit, the Association for Women in the Arts (AWITA).

Its purpose? “Supporting female ambition in the art world through mentoring, professional development and networking,” says co-founder Sigrid Kirk.

In a digital roundtable, AWITA hosted a Manila forecast moderated by the indomitable Trickie Lopa, founder of Art Fair Philippines and a key figure in elevating the country’s art scene.



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The deep dive into the Philippine art ecosystem included panelists such as longtime art collector Abby Chan, National Gallery of Singapore curator Clarissa Chikiamco, and Isa Lorenzo, director of Silverlens Gallery in Manila and New York.

“See this as an insider’s guide or cheat sheet into the Philippine art scene,” says Lopa, as the conversation touched on Filipino figures making waves internationally. Together, the panelists walked through the commercial side of galleries and auction houses, with a rundown of institutions, academic support, and art history.

Jumping off 2024

Looking back to last year, 2024 proved to be a banner year for Philippine art with Pacita Abad’s traveling retrospective at the MoMA PS1 and the Hammer Museum’s retrospective of David Medalla on the West Coast. Pio Abad’s shortlisting for the Turner Prize also signaled growing global recognition.

Meanwhile, the all-women roster of work by Anita Magsaysay-Ho, Nena Saguil, Maria Taniguchi, and Pacita Abad represented the Philippines at the [2024 edition of the prestigious Venice Biennale](https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/490382/pacita-abads-art-inspires-wonder-at-the-venice-biennale-moma-ps1/). (<https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/490382/pacita-abads-art-inspires-wonder-at-the-venice-biennale-moma-ps1/>)





Pacita Abad at the Silverlens booth of Art Fair PH 2025

READ: [Artist Sal Ponce-Enrile transforms tremors into triumph](https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/535782/artist-sal-ponce-enrile-transforms-tremors-into-triumph/)
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Silverlens is also exhibiting major shows including [James Clar](https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/470771/after-making-a-mark-in-the-new-york-art-world-james-clar-illuminates-manila/)
 (<https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/470771/after-making-a-mark-in-the-new-york-art-world-james-clar-illuminates-manila/>) at the Weisman Art Museum at Pepperdine University and [Maria Taniguchi at the MCAD](https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/534479/filipina-artists-womens-month-2025/) (<https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/534479/filipina-artists-womens-month-2025/>) in Manila.

As Filipino artists continue to gain international acclaim, discussions like these serve as essential guides to understanding the ever-evolving landscape of Philippine art, giving insight into the cultural temperature of our times.

Who to watch out for in 2025?

Both the curator, Chikiamco, and chief curator of the National Gallery of Singapore, Patrick Flores, are Filipino—signs of regional collaboration and strong Filipino art education.



Chikiamco shares with AWITA how the National Gallery Singapore is currently working on an exhibition focused on Fernando Zobel, who contributed to the “international language of abstraction” as a transcontinental artist active in Asia, Europe, and North America. Along with Flores, they are developing an iteration of “The Future of the Past,” which was previously at the Prado Museum in Spain in 2022 and will open in May 2025.

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She also points to upcoming international exhibitions, including Wawi Navarroza’s show in Shanghai, Taloi Havini’s exhibition at a major New York institution in May, and Yee I-Lann’s presentation at the Singapore Art Museum. Havini, though Australian, and Yee I-Lann, Malaysian, are both represented by the Filipino gallery and continue to gain global recognition.

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Beyond these, three international shows by Silverlens artists feature prestigious art prizes. Pio Abad is shortlisted for the Turner Prize, Norberto Roldan will participate in El Museo del Barrio’s Triennale in New York, and Stephanie Syjuco’s work will be featured in the Hawaii Triennial.

“It’s funny because I’m from a gallery, but I’m telling you about our museum shows,” Lorenzo says. “For our gallery shows, I can tell you off the bat which artists will have a big year—not just in the Philippines, but internationally.”

Lorenzo continues to cite more Filipino artists making waves abroad, including veteran activist-artist Imelda Cajipe Endaya, San Francisco-based Keka Enriquez, who is returning after 20 years, and established names like [Geraldine Javier](https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/531709/geraldine-javier-batangas-home/) (<https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/531709/geraldine-javier-batangas-home/>) and Norberto Roldan. Martha Atienza will unveil a massive exhibition in Naoshima in May, while Patricia Eustaquio is set to show at Art Basel in Switzerland.

Lopa also highlights successful artists beyond traditional three-dimensional work, mentioning “curator darlings” and performance artists Eisa Jocson and Joshua Serafin.

“All this work was born in the Philippines,” Lorenzo emphasizes, underscoring the global impact of Filipino art.

Market dynamics

The Philippine art scene is experiencing unprecedented international recognition. As Lorenzo explains, “There really is a buzz around Southeast Asia” that has been 20 years in the making. The region is no longer a blind spot, with museums increasingly seeking to diversify their collections.

Chikiamco notes the excitement, highlighting that people are “amazed by the energy in the art scene, even in just Manila alone.”

Lopa adds to this, citing the creative economy in the Philippines as valued at P21.72 trillion in 2023 (approximately 23 billion pounds), with the visual arts market roughly estimated at around P2 billion annually.

Lopa says, “When we started Art Fair PH in 2013, we had 24 galleries. At that time, if anybody asked me if an international gallery wanted to join the art fair, I would have said, ‘No, I’m sorry, Filipinos would not look at your work’.... But over the years, as the awareness of contemporary art has grown, it’s also brought in galleries from within the region—Japanese and Taiwanese galleries, for example, do well when they come to the fair. I guess that’s safe to say that there are Filipinos who are buying international art at a certain price point.”

