

# Cracking the Symphony

A Visual Composition during the Pandemic

By *Tess Rayos del Sol*

*“beauty is a much better path to understanding, it has the ability to transform even the everyday lives of men and women”*

*Pope Francis*

The world has momentarily stopped. Strange days looms, quite different from the busy and bustling before Covid 19 hits the world. Devastating economic and social disruption has caused fear, anxiety of getting the virus and of falling into poverty. Coping to the immense emotional stress brought about by feeling of isolation challenges both adults and children.

Many regarded art as non-essential and not having a serious value, but a larger number of people used their time discovering their creative pursuits as their coping methods for ease and comfort. It has become their antidote for individual chaos relieving mental and physical stresses.

Artists on the other hand takes the pandemic and the quarantine in a different perspective. To them the disruption is the time to continue their work. It is the time to continue to create, to speak and write as for them, despair, fear nor silence is non-existent as it is their job to make art right at the moment in time they are living it. and hopefully start the way to healing.

Like other artists, Kublai Millan, Agi Pagkatipunan and Danny Rayos del Sol continues to work on their 3<sup>rd</sup> collaboration for ManilART 2020. Completing the trilogy, from Mind, Body and Soul to Dungaw to Symphony, it challenge them even more in creating a new perspective of collaboration. Unlike the first two collaboration where all three artists worked on a single piece of work, in Symphony, all of them have a liberty to create their own interpretation, like a self-standing note, in a signature style they are known for. A visual composition that is unique and new, depicting a visual symphony that speaks of hope and healing.

Although their mediums are of disparate forms unlike a triptych that is made by one artist, they want the artwork to be appreciated together. Symphony lets the viewer think and imagine about the design until they are challenge to understand and discover the meaning and movement of the pieces. Coming to terms as to how the artwork speaks to the viewer and how they can digest the three different artworks in one composition is the goal as they look from one panel to the next.

## *Agi Pagkatipunan*

Wood, one of the oldest art material is the medium which Agi Pagkatipunan uses for his art. Starting as furniture maker, he later found his love and respect with the medium. The long-time love affair made him understand more all its nuances and weaknesses, an asset that he uses to maximize its potential.

In Symphony, Pagkatipunan’s representation is likened to the first part of a real symphony where he will expose through his imaginative sculpting the troubled situation we

are in, people's fear and anxiety, loosening structures, the pandemic. It is aggressive, flowing, taunting expressing a very powerful emotion, from the most tender to violent, ecstatic feeling.

While Agi normally use parquetry in geometric and flat composition, he uses a different form of sculpting to show the intensity of reality going beyond the mere presentation of fact but to elicit and communicate to the viewer the range of emotions from subtlety to outrage.

### *Danny Rayos del Sol*

The resiliency of the Filipinos amidst social disruptions is quite admirable because of bayanihan. People draw strength from the higher being and from the support of the community. This kind of response is the kind of response that is often pushed, for people to move forward and bounce back.

Rayos del Sol, in the same way, responded with hope and healing through his artwork. The nudges of intense emotion brought about by suffering in the first panel did not dominate and pressured him to take it all in.

His response veers towards helping the viewers realize that art can help them, that they can dream still with new realities, cope up and ultimately change the world. He likes telling stories of hope and through his medium, he wants people to realize that there are so many ways to make sense of changes and crisis.

Rayos del Sol's carved ostrich egg is his representation of man's consciousness and the kamagong holding it is the physical body. He says, I want people to see man's talent and resilience. I know that by showing them a good art, their mind can metamorphose into something beautiful, something positive, something happy!"

In his mix media representation of mind and body, the ostrich egg's three dimensional expression of shapes and patterns catches the shadows of shallow dents and prominent sloping ridges creating a light effect within the work.

He exploited the use of the natural properties of kamagong, its usual deep black color with streaks of brown and its texture. He shaped the forms and movements of the sculpture so soft like being blown by the wind receiving light and shade noting a powerful force.

Like the second movement in a symphony, his work altogether blends, a development towards the positive healing where progression is tranquil and passionate.

### *Kublai Millan*

The third panel after the development stage is the culmination of human mind's response to catastrophe. An allusion of encouragement to each other to get through what we are going now. A hope for a new beginning, a hope for restoration and finally synching the narrative of the three works. Like the final movement of a symphony, the third panel gives the prowess of the whole composition.

Kublai Millan's use of okir, an indigenous original patterns of the Maranao's depicts its psychological identity. Forms of flowing leaf and vine patterns interprets the beauty of nature, a symbol of power and prestige. The painting shows flourishing of flora and fauna that the environment has to offer, the beauty of nature, the calmness of the surroundings as symbolized by doves, butterflies.

Repeating patterns echoes the visual element of the artwork communicating the sense of balance, harmony, contrasting deep colors, and rhythm of movement. It shows the re-emergence of the mind to a positive response and not of suffering.

Pope Francis says, *artists can help people discover the beauty of God's love, and through beauty, artists make the world better.*" Looking at the wholeness of the composition presents the narrative of the Symphony and like music it is in sync with the artists' beliefs; Pagkatipunan's respect for the environment, the spirituality and introspection of Rayos del Sol and Kublai's dream of oneness and peace. A call to find within oneself the strength, the wisdom and resolve to carry on amidst the storm.

*The Symphony at ManilART 2020 on December 9-13, 2020 at SMX Aura, Fort Bonifacio Taguig City.  
Tickets are available via Ticketbooth.*