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TEXTUAL STORIES: THE ART ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (AAP) AND ITS SCHEMES OF ORGANIZATION

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Artworld institutions like the Art Association of the Philippines (AAP), which was founded as a union of Filipino visual artists based on the American Artists Equity model of specialized professional advancement, are by nature sites of the production of power through ritualized acts of legitimation and exchange with other empowered members, like art collectors, and art dealers. This study focuses on a reading of the foundational texts of the AAP from 1948 to 1986, that defines and narrates the scope of agential power that members of the AAP's hierarchy, specifically its elected leadership, can exercise in the name of its membership. These agential powers are thus seen as avenues of political possibilities in which the AAP can expand its influence and prestige by "exchanging" its function as a producer of artworld legitimacy (via its Annual Art Competitions, for example) in return for symbolic recognition from both state and private sector actors. Utilizing Benedict Anderson's concept of an "imagined community," the study establishes the conventions by which institutions in the artworld relate specifically to

state organs and regulatory bodies that situate the AAP and other arts organizations within a grid of intelligibility that allows the discourse of nation-ed modernity to be both constructed and imagined by its constituents. In addition, Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "cultural capital" is also applied to establish the political economy of the artworld, and how the AAP delimits its own field of symbolic production and exchange using such terms as "artist," "patron," and "board member" to signify a hieratic difference from other, less distinguished professions. Finally, the politics of inclusion and exclusivity as AAP members, or officers, are analyzed as part of the productive capacity of the association to function institutionally via aesthetic legitimation, which the AAP uses as additional cultural capital for the political and economic gains of its membership.

Keywords: AAP, imagined community, artworld, cultural capital, symbolic production

ANY STUDY IN CONTEMPORARY PHILIPPINE ART HISTORY, especially as it regards to the formally educated, artworld-defined core of fine art objects produced, displayed and/or consumed within the national capital region, would not be complete without the discussion of the impact that the Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) has made in this field. Founded in 1948, the AAP has made significant contributions to this field especially in the period between 1948 and 1987 as it is composed of the most significant practitioners of this field, whose significance is again defined within the artworld¹ parameters of fine art. That is to say, painters, sculptors, printmakers, mixed media artists, and others that are defined by the artworld as constituting the field of practitioners in the fine arts have leading practitioners based mostly in Manila that have belonged, in one way or another, to the AAP, by virtue of their membership and their participation in its various institutional activities.

This study focuses on the historical body of texts that flesh out a crucial period (between 1948 and 1987) that establishes the legitimacy of this organization in the eyes of the state as well as its constituents and interlocutors—the institutional by-laws and norms of operations of the AAP. The significance of understanding this textual body in relation to art history is threefold. First, it establishes the conventions by which institutions in the artworld relate specifically to state organs and regulatory bodies that situate this and other organizations within a grid of intelligibility that allows the discourse of nation-ed modernity to be both constructed and imagined by its constituents, following Benedict Anderson's contention of an "imagined community" (1983, 6-7). Simultaneously, this textual construction also delimits the imagined presence of this community to that of a specific subclass of citizens defined according to their profession: painters, sculptors, printmakers, and other occupations that are specifically endowed the term "artist," and whose qualification of being named as such relies as much on notions of social distinction and taste, as outlined by Pierre Bourdieu in his notion of "cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1984, 283-285).

Nonetheless, the contention of this textual construction as auguring a set of activities that distinguishes and normalizes this organization as a site of habituation and specialist practice should also necessarily take into consideration the contention that such regulated and repetitive practices as annual art competitions, Christmas parties, and even Board elections and the choosing of the AAP President is an example of an "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm in Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, 1-5). This body of "invented traditions" takes into consideration the nature of power as an exchange relationship between its regulators and its interpellators. These regulators/interpellators includes not only the state (symbolized by

the Philippine Security and Exchange Commission or SEC) versus the body of artists, but also the AAP Board members versus their own constituents. In light of all the possible notions that allow us to understand the institutional formation of artworld institutions, therefore, what needs to be asked is: what are the discourses that circumscribe the specific set of power relations between the state and its citizenry through the legal and juridical regulation of such an artworld institution as the AAP, and in what ways do these discourses form particular sets of practices that animate the AAP as the fulfillment of that discourse, both in the eyes of the state and to the AAP's own professional constituency?

In its first Corporate By-Laws, submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on 24 March 1952, the general purposes of the AAP, its programs, plans of action, activity and general institutional template, were configured and stated as follows:

To advance, foster and promote the interests of those who work in the Fine Arts, including painters, sculptors, and graphic artists, to protect and secure the rights of such artists in their professional activities, to procure appropriate legislation upon which policies as shall secure united action of all members of the said profession for the common good, to prevent and abolish abuses from which those coming under the jurisdiction of the Association shall or may suffer, to assist such persons in securing just and equitable contracts, agreements, and compensation in their dealings with person connected directly or indirectly with the Fine Arts; to investigate the practices of such persons, and to take united action to abolish any unfair

dealings or abuses or other conditions which are detrimental to members engaged in the said profession; to treat with persons whose activities affect the members, concerning grievances, standard contractual relations and all related collateral practices which affect the welfare of the members; to take such suitable action with regard to the unauthorized use of works of art as will protect the members in the practice of their professions; to combine and coordinate the activities of the Association with the activities of other organizations whenever such combination or coordination shall be in the best interests of the members of the Association; and to enter into agreements for united action for the common good with other associations of artists or other persons whose cooperation shall be deemed helpful; to do or to cause to be done or refrain from doing, such acts or things, either as an Association or through individual members, as may be lawfully done, or as it or they may lawfully refrain from doing, which shall be advantageous to the members of the Association (AAP 1952b, 1).²

Note that in the declaration, the term “interests” is mentioned several times, both explicitly and implicitly, and is causally linked to those whom it serves, “those who work in the Fine Arts,” including (but apparently not limited to) “painters, sculptors, and graphic artists,” as related to specifically productive and occupational life-concerns of these said patients (“to protect and secure the rights of such artists in their professional activities...”). It also identifies those whose interests it opposes, the invisible agents who “abuse those coming under the jurisdiction of the Association”; whose efficacy the Association is to

neutralize by “securing just and equitable contracts, agreements and compensation.” Its opponents also include as those who engage in “the unauthorized use of works of art,” pledging its unified protection of “the members in the practice of their professions.”

The other crucial term in this document is “common good,” which is here refunctioned as a term exclusively used to demarcate the status of members from those who are nonmembers, if not anti-members. The status of beneficence imbues those who have been demarcated as worthy of membership to the AAP within an already formed macrofield of institutional practice, the Philippine artist community. The document specifically outlines those parameters by which the conventionality of membership is perfunctioned within the conditions of occupational trade, as substantiated under the rubric of “tak(ing) united action to abolish any unfair dealings or abuses or other conditions which are detrimental to members engaged in the said profession” (*ibid.*).

By what manner then is the perfunctioning of the term “member” reified into an agentic position? Article IV, Section 1 of the 1986 AAP By-Laws provides the general parameters:

Membership in the Association is open to the following classes of persons:

- Artists in the graphic and plastic arts;
- Art collectors;
- Persons giving material support for the maintenance of the Association, and those who are lovers of the fine arts (AAP 1986, 3).

Section 2b provides a more specific delineation of such “classes” of members:

- Regular members are artists in the visual arts;
- Honorary members, who are art collectors duly elected as such;
- Patron members, who are those who give substantial material support or services for the maintenance of the Association and the furtherance of its purposes;
- Associate members, who are those persons who help support the Association by the payment of dues, and include art lovers and interested in furthering the purposes of the Association; and
- Advisory Members (3-4).

In addition, Section 3 provides the mechanism of the accessioning of members:

Regular, Patron and Honorary Members shall be invited and elected to membership by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

Associate Members shall be admitted to membership upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the Membership Committee, (and) approved by the President of the Association (4).

The mechanism for the production of the AAP member, therefore, is facilitated via an elaborate system of familiar relations that course throughout the fabric of personhoods within the art institution: prospective members had to be willing to pay for their membership dues, but

also had to be *recommended* as a member by a fellow member. This form of institutional closure is apparent as a matter of power discourse between the AAP officers concerned and the accessionary candidate, the latter being the subaltern in relation to the dominant institution. What is interesting in this equation is the notion of democratic consensuality in the approval of such a membership. Membership is, after all, a privilege, not a right. It is not automatically bestowed to any art practitioner in the Manila/Philippine artworld system. It is bestowed on those whom the members of the AAP Board finds “suitable” as worthy of such privilege. The traditional definition of Regular Member as a practitioner of the Fine/high arts is indicative of this form of exclusivity. The presumption holds: if the members of the AAP Board, and its already accessioned members are either practitioners or—even better—patrons of the high arts, it also goes to hold that this epistemic distinction hold for subsequent accession of additional members.

Consequently, the public that constituted the AAP, at least in its initial stages of (nonetheless influential) formation, were *self-constituted* as members of the art elite, taking as their referential parameter either the academic institutional affiliation of prospective member (at the time practically cartelized by two schools of fine arts, University of the Philippines and University of Santo Tomas), or, in cases when academic credentials are nonexistent, through favorable recommendations provided by a sufficiently empowered AAP member or an AAP Board member as friend, colleague, extended family member, or friend-of-a-friend. In this way, entry to the AAP membership of practitioners in the mass arts, such as advertising, poster arts, billboards, and industrial design was delayed substantially. It was not until the 1952 Annual that categories for the media arts, such as poster design, was included.³ Of course, such an inclusion is also presumed upon the premise that

Advertising Arts was viewed by the Philippine artworld community as a necessary mode of industrial manufacture that provided for employment and income for many of its economically struggling artists. Nevertheless, the privileging of “fine arts” as an exclusionary term, already overly determined by academic distinctions such as certificates and baccalaureate degrees that subsequently legitimated art industries, delimits specifically the nature of members into those who, after all, “work in the fine arts,” to the detriment of those who do not (e.g., shoe cobblers and signboard painters). This hermeneutic practice—ranking production of artistic goods into classes, and subsequently determining social acceptability of its producers as members—still holds today. By such a strategy, the AAP includes as well as excludes the legitimacy of its artistic population, constituted as an act of institutional imposition, but which is fundamentally premised on epistemological models of artistness, whose revision may be envisaged, but also should such occur, would happen within an atmosphere of institutional reformatting, according to those artist-agents within that see it as their joint interests for doing so.

Finally, the confirmation of membership was consummated upon both textual and material premises, the former through completion of requirements of status, and the latter upon payment of the annual membership dues, which in 1952 amounted to ten pesos. The specifying delineation of exchange value (membership in exchange for payment of financial dues) is, in fact, one that has often been contentious. In Section 6 of the By-Laws, the following exhortation is pronounced upon the body of institutional practice by the matrix of institutional authority:

The membership fee and first year's dues shall be paid before a person elected to membership shall be qualified as a member, and if he shall not pay the same within thirty days after notification of election, he shall be deemed to have declined election and his name dropped.

As subsequently noted by Purita Kalaw-Ledesma, the payment of dues was an institutional innovation imposed upon the fabric of the AAP's constitution by C.M. Hoskins, an American real estate entrepreneur and influential AAP Board member whose childhood interest in art was "frustrated by parental objection" (Kalaw-Ledesma and Guerrero 1974, 10). Apparently, it was Hoskins who, in 1949, had institutionalized the textual existence of the AAP via his "meddling" in the AAP's administrative setup. Among these interventionary practices included:

...compell(ing) all the members to pay their dues. This brought a howl from the artists, but they had no choice save to comply, for expulsion was the price of delinquency. Some members dropped out, and for a while I feared that the association would flounder. But Hoskins assured me—"don't worry; they'll come back because they need the AAP. (10)

An interesting feature in the 1952 By-Laws is a single, pregnant line in Section 6 concerning the dues of Honorary and Patron Members, to which we can circumscribe Hoskin's relation as businessman / AAP officer with the AAP artist-members: "Honorary and Patron members are **not subject** to the payment of fees and dues as such" (emphasis mine). If Hoskins, as comparatively wealthy patron and AAP officer, does not pay fees and dues, and the artist-members who are comparatively poor do, then

what is the catch? It seems that such a relation implies that of total dependency on members to the institutional powers, which under Hoskins conflates across multiple lines of signification: as (Westerner) patron/capitalist, as (Anglo-Saxon) privileged and elite, and as (white) artworld superior. The reproduction of colonialist discourse is here very tempting, for the “project of modernity,” to borrow Nestor Garcia Canclini’s argument,⁴ is here conflated with the institutional interests of the elite (here multiply intersecting with the overdetermination of Hoskins as white/businessman/AAP officer), producing in its stead a multiplication or hybridity of modern along with colonial-feudalist conditions. The reproduction of this discourse is premised at the very act in which the patron circumscribes his/her power over the artist: in the preference and purchase of works of art within a market system, especially one gripped with the starvation conditions of post-Liberation reconstruction. The “howls of protest,” circumscribed under the rubric of unequal power relations, no longer seems so self-serving, though the author contends that the production of dissent is precisely at the point in which the activation of agency is negated by the production of counter-agency massively reformed under the conditions of the political spaces of permissibility. Metaphorically speaking, peasants simply do not roll over and play dead while the overlord demanding tribute from them does not pay taxes to his king. They revolt in any way they can.

Nonetheless, it is to Hoskins that Ledesma also relates the very formational devices by which the AAP has institutionalized its practices:

On the matter of exhibitions, Hoskins laid down equally stringent regulations. He decreed that all paintings which came in late—even just five minutes late—would be disqualified. Once

more, a furor ensued, but the point was made...never again would we entertain tardy entries.

Hoskins was instrumental in incorporating the association, and getting official lawyers for the AAP (the late Claro M. Recto and Claudio Teehankee...). He also insisted that we acquire an auditor (Sycip, Gorres and Velayo, who for many years donated their services...)

The Association learned many things from Hoskins. He brought us down to earth and taught us how to run the AAP like a business corporation...

Through his initiative, the AAP began to deposit its money in a bank. Our employees were taught how to draw up vouchers, and our members learned how not to price their paintings too steeply in anticipation of a price reduction. We also began putting up a catalogue of prices for the paintings...He insisted that artists pay 30% commission on sale of their works, a practice which has become standard procedure.

Hoskins served the AAP from 1949 to 1955, and in the years which followed...he continued to advise us on administrative matters.

...He...left the AAP an...important legacy: discipline and organization, a solid foundation without which it would not have survived those years. (10)

“Discipline” and “organization”: two terms that is as loaded as any in the production of institutional discourse. As Foucault would see it, the practice of discipline is formulated equally by the institutionalization of monocular knowledge, and the imposition of invisible forms of power within the equational relations of permissibility and punishment. Taking Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon as his model, Foucault’s analysis problematizes the notion of the “all-seeing” as forms of domination, displacing the necessity of physical punishment through the modality of uncounterable omni-surveillance. What Foucault does not take into account, argues Madan Sarup (1983, 66-84), is the origin of the strategy, and its tactics—especially in the development of a strategy of resistance and implied counter-surveillance. Here, it is important to deconstruct the premise of surveillance as forms of monocular impositionary power that delineates and distinguishes those who manipulate and impose it, and to those who, upon entering the pre-ordained system of relations, either conforms to its massive force, or works in invisible or concealed strategies to undermine or transfer its locus. Surveillance, after all, is only as effective as its efficiency in policing the social and psychic realms of dissent. If such a dissent exists between and among each agent in a field configured as a *collective*, then its operational premise of omniscience also crumbles due to the constant bombardment and transfer of devices of institutional power between such agents in a condition of *convention*. Such also hold in the structuralization of the organization/institution. If the premise of its construct is based on the positionalities of power, and of its trade in relations of interests, then it also holds that the normally static system of organizational dispositions are always configured within lines of transverse force-relations: AAP officers, after all, are elected by their artist-peers, and their continued administration of organizational policies—not to mention

their continued distinction as officers of the AAP—is ultimately dependent on the accrual of communal interests that benefit its member-voters, measured in both tactical (short-term) and strategic (long-term) gains.

Such a relation is, as a matter of course, countervailed by the notions of membership/officership discipline, sometimes circumscribed under the rubric of “responsibility.” Not only are members expected to retain their membership through the regular annual payment of dues; such were also activated via the discursive practices by which the members are bound by oath to the strictures of disciplinary rules by which the AAP protects its (own/common) interests, the violation of which were correspondent to a system of punishment.

This series of corresponding interpellations between members and their duties are distributed throughout the 1952 AAP By-Law’s text. Primary among these were the conditions that governed membership dues. Section 6, Paragraph 2 says as much:

Annual dues shall become payable on the first of March of each year, and if the same shall remain unpaid after the sixteenth of April following, the member in arrears shall become automatically delinquent, suspended from membership privileges, and during such period shall cease to be a member in good standing (AAP 1952b, 2).

Another set of expectations circumscribes the duties of particular officers and board directors in the exercise of their functions. In the case of inattendance to board meetings, where institutional policy is debated and decided upon, Section 7 outlines the conditions and corresponding

penalty pointedly: “Absence from three consecutive meetings of the Board operates as the resignation of a director, unless such absence is excused by the Board.” Incidentally, the significance of the Board’s duties compels the production of substitutes that could “fill in” the possible vacancies, as indicative in the Section’s last sentence: “A vacancy in the Board may be filled by the remaining directors.” Also, the stipulated number of the Board as a whole is not allowed, so says Sections 7 and 9, to go below the absolute minimum of six (constituting the minimum Board quorum out of the maximal eleven), the occurrence of which immediately results in activating the emergency mechanism of a Special General Meeting of the membership to fill the vacancies.

The duty of electoral manifestation is imposed on every regular member via secret balloting, the specific delineation of which is that such members may only vote individually; cumulative voting not being permitted. A separate and elaborate scheme of elections is hereby perfunctioned within the very tense rubric of leadership carnivalization as acts of intentional mono-closure: the regular member, presumably voting in his/her best interests, shall vote for a Board director, eleven of whom shall be constituted, and who among themselves will vote the officers, each of these actions intended as a personal/individual decision.

Another set of duties/powers awaits those persons who, having reached the crucial positionality of organizational officers, are now perforced to fulfill their respective duties. Let us sum each according to the 1952 By-Laws.

Designation and duties of AAP Officers

- President: presides at meetings of the Board, and is the chief executive officer of the Association, and as such enforces all order and resolutions of the Board. It is the duty of the President to present to the annual general meeting a report of the operations and activities of the Association for the preceding year.
- Vice-President: performs such duties as may be delegated to them by the President, and in the order of succession fixed by the Board discharges the duties of the President in the absence, incapacity or disqualification of the latter.
- Secretary: gives notice of all meetings of the Board and of members; conducts the correspondence and keeps all records not pertaining to the office of the Treasurer, including minutes of meetings; keeps a roster of all members, with their addresses; and performs such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board.
- Treasurer: has general charge of the books and accounts of the Association. He (She) collects the dues of members and all other accounts owing to the Association, and is required to deposit the same intact in the bank or banks designated by the Board. Under the direction and authority of the Board the Treasurer disburses the funds of the Association, or with the approval of the officer or committee chairman authorized by the Board to incur expenditures. It is the duty of the Treasurer to keep all accounts of the Association, including an inventory of all property belonging thereto, and to

submit an annual report to the members after the close of each fiscal year, and such interim report as the Board may prescribe. The books of account of the Treasurer are open to inspection at all times by the members of the Board, and to audit by such person or committee as the Board or members by vote may select. All funds received by the Treasurer for a special purpose shall be recorded in the accounts as such, and may not be disbursed except for the purposes for which received.

- Historian: keeps a cumulative record of important events connected with the Association, including a register of winners of art awards, a scrap book of clippings, copies of art catalogues, invitations and publications, and all other material which may become of historical interest in relation to art development in the Philippines. The Historian is ex-officio Librarian of the Association, unless the Board creates the separate office of Librarian. (3-4)

A more serious set of actions and implications govern those members in the area of discipline. Several sections of the 1952 By-Laws, in fact, dedicate themselves to this premise. The activating circumstance is here defined by the By-Laws as violations of its own laws, the rules and regulations promulgated by the Board, or (and this passage is crucial): “for any cause which is deemed to reflect discredit upon the Association, or for professional conduct deemed unethical or irregular. The corresponding (counter) mechanism is also outlined.”

System of Expelling AAP Members

- The Board of Directors causes an investigation to be made of the charges against the member to the

extent it deems necessary, and to obtain if practicable the defense of the member charged.

- The Board of Directors, meeting in caucus, suspends or expels the “erring” member by a two-thirds vote;
- The suspended or expelled member has the right to appeal to the General or Special General Meeting of Regular Members, whose decision is final. The suspended and expelled member may attend the meetings here mentioned, but shall not be considered as of good standing for the purposes of determining quorum or voting purposes until after such suspended or expelled member is restored to the privileges of members by resolution of the regular members convened by such Annual or Special General Meeting. (6)

Hence, a dynamic strategy of co-valenced and co-oppositional agencies are enfolded in this system that advocates processual transparency, as well as hierarchical verticality, of relations between members/officers as co-agents in the general institutional framework—and common interests—of the AAP.

Implicated in this institutional practice is the matrix of production between fields of capital, primarily the symbolic, the economic, and the aesthetic. Jose Tence Ruiz enfolds for us this matrix as artworld practices conflated with the establishment of a socio-political art commune renewed at every processed disposition. Investigating the initial premise of the AAP’s articulation, Ruiz notes:

The revelations we have gathered reveal an essential characteristic of the AAP which needs to be appreciated: that the AAP was put together

in the spirit of convention. It was not an organization dedicated to the advancement of a specific school of thought or action, but rather, to a notion of inclusion (emphasis mine) community building and consolidation, as it were. It intended to pursue activities relevant to the *welfare* (emphasis mine) of a sector with particular inclinations and skills. (Ruiz in Cañete 1999, 111-112)

This contention arose from Ledesma's account of the origins of the AAP:

Excluding those who came and went (like Hugo Yonzon Jr. and his classmates), there were thirteen charter members—Diosdado Lorenzo, (Antonio) Dumlao, Ramon Peralta Jr., Nemesio Faustino, Severino Fabie...Virginia Flor Agbayani, Emilio Aguilar Cruz, Candido Alcantara, Dominador Castañeda, Francesco Monti, Alfredo Pestaño, Fermin Sanchez, and myself.

We decided that the organization would be known as the Philippine Art Association, but Abe Cruz...observed that its initials were unpoetic...He suggested the Art Association of the Philippines, or AAP, and thus it has been known ever since.

...We met regularly during the succeeding weeks, and each time the ranks of observers and interested parties swelled...

...we were now prepared to write the constitution of the AAP. An invaluable assist in this direction came from Lily Harmon (Mrs. Joseph

Hirshorn)...We invited her to one of our meetings, and in her talk, she emphasized the practical aspects of painting and sculpture. Her main argument was that for an association of artists to succeed, it must eschew the purely cultural and take note of the living problems of the artist (emphasis mine) i.e., it must promote the financial side. In carrying out its purpose, the association in addition must not embrace a doctrine or favor a particular group or school of thought.

...Later...Mrs. Hirshorn sent us a copy of the constitution of the Artist's Equity, an American organization familiar with the problems confronting artists and art groups in the United States.

Their constitution was sophisticated, socialistic and comprehensive. One look at it and we felt practically everything we needed was here. Soon after, we drafted our own constitution, and it was one heavily influenced by Equity's. The membership in the association was open to artists in the graphic and plastic arts, art collectors, persons giving material support for the maintenance of the association and those who were lovers of the fine arts...

The stage was set for our first public activity, a retrospective exhibit of the works of Fabian de la Rosa, a homage to our old professor...

...After the de la Rosa exhibit, the AAP pursued a two-pronged program by offering incentives to artists seeking means to improve

the quality of art. On the priority list was a competition (emphasis mine) which was soon to be an annual affair. At stake were several prizes, including a first prize...donated by Andres Soriano Sr., an art enthusiast. The donation was made possible by Dumlao, a Soriano employee. At the same time, the association's secretary, Peralta, an Ilocano who knew President Quirino, requested the Apo to inaugurate the show (one of the drawings exhibited was a pencil sketch of the Filipino flag by the President...)

The competition was held at the National Museum on Herran...Museum Director Quisumbing, one of our advisers, drummed up public interest for the affair...

...The board of jurors was a balanced one, including (Fernando) Amorsolo, (Victorio) Edades, E. Aguilar Cruz and Francesco Monti...Amorsolo, the idol of the conservatives, listed four moderns in his lineup of the first six; this was a measure of his fairness. It took the judges about two hours to decide on the winners...(Kalaw-Ledesma and Guerrero 1974, 8-14)

Several points are of interest in this account. Firstly, it was through the activating agency of Kalaw-Ledesma who, in her monologue on the AAP's origins, admitted that the association came into its own through her own search for "artistic happiness," that jump-started the production of a communal art institutional space which she felt to be previously "absent"—or rather, deformed, due to the exegetical conditions of postwar basic survival (8). Hence,

the conflation: Purita Kalaw-Ledesma and AAP must always be reconsidered in the equated concerns of formative practices, life concerns, and (unelucidated) positionings in a period of extreme flux and uncertainty. Secondly, although the (feminine?) space opened for the AAP was courtesy of Kalaw-Ledesma, the AAP's capital benefit lay primarily in the empowerment of a public of producers whose intentions for production are circumscribed within the market-oriented system of display and valorization. Hence, the possibility of competitive rivalry and interpersonal brinkmanship existed from its very genesis, although this is occluded by the necessity of joint protection provided by mutual protection of industrial/professional interests. Thirdly, the oft-repeated admonition that, in its formational years, the AAP has been projected as *inclusive* rather than exclusive allows the institutional term to be refunctioned across the entire art market, as divided into stylistic and personalistic factions, the Moderns and the Conservatives being the more dominant in this period. By presenting the AAP as a space that "balanced" competing ideological/stylistic interests within the nascent membership—as proven by the founding board's initial decision to honor Fabian dela Rosa (a revered idol among the Conservatives) with a retrospective, and the inclusion of "Conservatives" Fernando Amorsolo and Francesco Monti as jurors in the 1948 Annual; as well as accepting Modernists into the AAP's membership, and including Modernist jurors in the 1948 Annual (in the person of Victorio C. Edades and E. Aguilar Cruz), Kalaw-Ledesma can claim to have negated the fissionary tendency of the membership from splitting the AAP (as Philippine art community?) apart. Indeed, it would not be until 1955 (under the presidency of Dr. Gregorio G. Lim) that such a cataclysmic separation between the competing schools of thought within the AAP would occur. Lastly, by harking to a totalist reworking of the institution's identity as an all-encompassing union of artists, via the

constitutional supplements provided by Hirshorn, Kalaw-Ledesma's dream of providing a modernist framework within which artists could empower themselves as fully realized semi-autonomous modules within the Manila artworld, with similar social privileges and rights as the traditionally elite art collectors, would be fulfilled, giving those whom she sympathized with the same potential chances of material and social success that she currently enjoyed. This transference of modern art unionist discourse from imperial center to postcolonial periphery, following Canclini's argument, is analyzed on the premise that it operates on the notion of hybridity, of the unevenness of its operation. For its initial effort and its subsequent effects were as unexpected as they were hybrid: the AAP, indeed, became a dominant art institution, but it did not become the all-encompassing Artists Equity that its founders dreamt. Instead, it was formatted as an organization with an optional (meaning voluntary, hence potential) membership program for the visual artist. This divergence from totalizing modernity could not be readily explained, as its membership base by then had already spread beyond several schools (both of the academic and stylistic definitions), and by the early 1950s, had already encompassed members from as far apart as Ilocos (Ricarte Puruganan) and Cebu (Martino Abellana).

Nevertheless, the task that confronts us at this point is the transposition of power relations during the genesis of institutional practices, as well as its transpositions across historical time and process. The conditions of the late 1940s and early 1950s are quite different from those of the late 1980s and the 1990s only in the sense that the givens of society, aesthetics, and intellectual thought had shifted radically from the either-or modality of Conservative-Modern to the more uncertain relations between Representative and Nonrepresentative. Equally, the

reproducibility of the relations of power within the matrix of institutional practice is foregrounded and continuously articulated, and debated. It concerns most of the other implications that are coursed through Kalaw-Ledesma's narrative. One is the notion of institutional closure through self-identification among members as a social grouping, distinct and differentiated from nonmembers through their affiliation with institutional discourses: participation in elections; adherence to and manipulation of rules of membership; and, engagement of the devices of institutional symbolic production, such as art exhibitions and competitions. A further condition for the production of problematics that cuts through the epistemic fog like a tracer bullet is the incessant attempt at transforming the rules of institutional play.

One such attempt in 12 December 1986 led to the failed revision of the 1952 by-laws by the administration and membership under AAP President Eduardo Castrillo. Constituting themselves as an assembly in Angono, Rizal, during the so-called First National AAP Convention, 46 members of the AAP voted to have certain sections inserted, or revise old provisions from the 1952 By-Laws. Some were as subtly nuanced as a change in nomenclature: from "those who work in the Fine Arts" (AAP 1952, Section 2: 1) to "those who work in the visual arts" (AAP 1986, 1). Others were more dramatic. The 1986 amended by-laws incorporate an entirely new section (Section 3) devoted to "Offices," where previously the 1952 by-laws were silent:

(a) Principal Office. The principal office of the Association shall be located at such places in Metro Manila as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate.

(b) Other Office(s). The Association may also have branch offices, chapters or

correspondent offices at such places, either within or without the Philippines, as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate. (AAP 1986, Article 3: 2)

This is seen to be a direct result of the decision arrived at during the Conference and subsequently implemented during Castrillo's remaining term from 1986 to 1990, to establish regional and international chapters of the AAP in an attempt to further "democratize the AAP" by introducing policy-making and implementation at the local level.

Complementary to this decision was the expansion of the number of Board directors of the Association from eleven in 1952⁵ to fifteen in 1986.⁶ Also, whereas the 1952 By-Laws were specific in the delineation of participatory quasi-bureaucratic functions through the formation of distinct committees,⁷ the 1986 revised By-Laws were significantly silent on the nature of the committees to be assigned (AAP 1986, Article 8, Section 8). The above-mentioned sections are enlightening in what they both say, and what they do not say. The 1952 By-Laws comprehensively covers the practical/practisantal nature of the AAP's articulation as art institution with a social focus of taking care of its members through the assignment of particular tasks, which are implied to be semi-permanent, if not perpetual. Complicit to these are also the forms of surveillance and imposition of rules that are deployed by the Association in furtherance of its best interests. These delineated/differentiated tasks were as follows:

Job Descriptions of AAP Committees

- ...the selection and physical preparation of the place and hanging and lighting facilities of all exhibitions conducted by the Association; the

control, admission, and accomodation (sic) of those attending such exhibitions; the hanging and display of art works admitted for exhibit; and the custody of all exhibits and of the exhibition hall and its contents (Exhibition Committee).

- ...to pass on all art works submitted for entry at all exhibition conducted by the Association, and to refuse admission of such works as are clearly unsuitable for reason of lack of artistic merit or because same is considered improper for public exhibition. Appeals from the decisions of...the committee may be made to the President, whose decision is final.

It is also the duty of...the committee to prepare and submit to the Board before each exhibition conducted by the Association panels of names from which it recommends that committees of award shall be selected by the President, said panel being subject to approval and amendment by the Board (Selection Committee).

- ...to make recommendations to the Board on applications for Regular and Patron members, and to approve the admission of Associate members. The...committee is also charged with promoting the increase of membership of the Association (Membership Committee).
- ...to obtain adequate and favorable publicity for the activities of the Association and its members. The preparation and publication of an Association periodical may be delegated by the President to this Committee (Publicity Committee).

- ...to prepare for the consideration of the Board programs for cultural meetings, art education, lectures, seminars, and good fellowship gathers, and with managing the same (Program Committee).
- ...to procure donations of prizes to be awarded at exhibitions conducted by the Association (Donations Committee).
- ...to pass on and make awards in connection with competitive art exhibitions conducted by the Association. The number and assignment of committees of judges, and the bases on which judgements (sic) are to be determined may be prescribed by the Board. The identity of members appointed by the President to (the)...committee may not be disclosed until after the committee has made its awards (Committee of Judges).
- ...as the occasion demands, (such other committees) which may be deemed appropriate (Invitations/Rules/Finance/other Committees). (AAP 1952b, 4-5)

These assignment of tasks dovetails with the Association's already emergent practice (in the early 1950s) of aesthetic and material production in the form of the art competition, alongside its practice of institutional strengthening by interlinking either with art practitioners or others wishing to acquire symbolic capital with the AAP through the aegis of regular/honorary/patron membership. These practices are seen as energizing demand from a still nascent art patronage system that was just recovering from wartime devastation through the production of public relations, art events, and the active encouragement to patronize the hereto-functionary AAP art market—perhaps the only one large enough in the early

1950s to catch the regular collective interest of the Manila art public. Again, Ruiz narrows down some of these strategies within a relational matrix that that circumscribes the relations between AAP and the various agents and publics of the Manila-centered Philippine artworld within the milieu of postwar regeneration:

The period of reconstruction after the Second World War saw the AAP come together from what seemed an impulse to re-live the relatively peaceful pre-war days. Its first activity was dedicated to a retrospective of a then underrated Fabian de la Rosa, followed by the first Annual in July, 1948. The Annual would continue to be the AAP's legacy, providing a central event, a citywide, even national fiesta if you will, for all the factions then extant in the static visual arts to attend and stake their claims to currency, relevance, even dominance. By having styles itself as a disinterested super-body, the AAP developed clout in purveying taste to the bourgeoisie and managed to stand witness to a development in the practice. It cannot claim to be the main stimulus of movements, but nevertheless acted as a barometer of where the more engaging segments of the sector were headed. (Ruiz in Cañete 1999, 114)

By contrast, the handling of this practisanal strategy by the mid-1980s have given way to a more uncertain status, with the AAP institutional practice in decline despite the phenomenal growth of the Manila art market in the intervening forty years since the mid-1940s. An index of this decline shows in the text concerning the assignment of committees in the revised 1986 By-Laws (Article 8, Section 8), as being:

The Board of Directors or the President may appoint such committees, whose membership may *or may not be members of the Association*, and confer it with such power and function as may be desirable for the interests of the Association. (emphasis mine)

Not only is this passage highly contentious (what committees and the nature of its work, after all, could be needed in order to satisfy the desirable interests of the Association?), but also that the inclusion of nonmembers to committees—that are highly influential bodies which foster exclusion, valorization, and symbolic fetishization—is also highly irregular to the common interests of the AAP members, as the committees are opened up to interventionary practices by nonmembers, or even anti-members.

Other questions dwell as well. Looking at the 1986 document, one is struck by the multiplication/fragmentation of institutional authority from the self-enclosure of the AAP's body into the alien Others, as seen in the appointments of persons within the power matrix of the AAP. Article 8, Section 7 is particularly open to this tendency:

The Board of Directors may appoint such other officers or agents as the business of the Association may require, including one or more assistant treasurers and one or more assistant secretaries, each of whom shall hold office and have *such authority and perform such duties* as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine. (emphasis mine) (AAP 1986, 12)

To impose such a condition upon the core of the quasi-bureaucracy's mechanism is to question the nature of the central competency of the roles of such offices, even

when one takes into account the possibility that such conventions were agreed upon using the chapter concept in mind—hence, a devolution of administrative functions from “national” to “local.” The results not only fragment the bureaucracy into competing mini-centers of an already tenuous institutional practice; it also produces anachronistic conditions of feudalist power-relations between and across the body of membership/officership as a matter of the defense of immediate (read: local) interests: If one is constituted, at the basic level of regional distinctions, then its bodies of practice, its corpus of distinction, and its matrix of practice also separate and distinctify into regional/parochialist boundaries. Considering that the sources of institutional power are webbed into distinct zones of suburbanist artistic consumption (e.g., Metropolitan Manila), the net result is that some chapters will always benefit more from their specific areas of geographic delimitation, with an already-formed critical core of circulators and consumers, than others (e.g., Eastern Samar, Aurora, and Batanes). The rationale for the formation of the charter specifically, then, was inherently political and short-term: The attempt to satisfy the critics of “centralist-imperialist” (specifically anti-Manilan) discourse in favor of the “dispersalist-regionalist” one. That this utterance occurred at the height of macro-political reversals during the first year of Corazon Aquino’s administration (explicitly announced not only in the *grande carnivale* that was the People Power Movement, but also in the *petits-carnivales* of the OIC replacements across every city and municipality from April to July 1986) bespoke a paradigmatic affiliation, let alone an activation of such agencies similar to the macro-political ones in the pursuit of political influence—hence, power—in a still potent (though quasi-humbled) center. Still, there was the gazing presence of the (undoubtedly Panoptacist) AAP Presidency on the body of the AAP, as much as there was still the

irrevocably monocular gaze of Malacañang at the corpus of the nation, and this resolution of forces into chapters and center only heightened the sense of interlinked-ness and interdependency between marginal and central: Politically symbolic for all but dispensatory to only one, at the expense of the accessionary others.

Another subtle subtext is also here reminded: The production of a revisionary/revisionist AAP by-laws occurred simultaneously with the production—also at the macro-political level—of the same at the core of national constitutional law. The perfunctory abolition of the Marcosian 1973 Constitution and its immediate replacement with the medially co-valenced Coryist Freedom Constitution in April 1986; and the brief but intense polemics in the production in the Constitutional Commission of what would eventually be enfolded as the 1987 Constitution between June to November 1986, all indicated a more-than-casual/coincidental relationship. If anything, the relationship was causal and inferential. As the constitutional fabric of the nation was torn apart, reclothed, pruned of its totalitarian chain-mail, and refashioned with hand-me-down accessories (the return, say, of the bicameralist if structurally inefficient form of legislature abolished by Marcos in 1973), so was the legal skeleton of the AAP fractured, dismembered, and recomposed into a Frankensteinian parody of the phallic art confederacy.

The supreme irony in this affair is that, despite the 1986 By-Law's pretended legitimacy—only ninety AAP members affixed their signatures on the revised By-Laws at the Angono Convention, versus an initial estimate of 733 members in the AAP roster from 1982 to 1990, and its on-the-surface-legality, as can be ascertained in the undated legal certificate submitted to the SEC—its attempt to “reorganize” and “renew” the AAP's legal structure all came to naught. No seals of approval or notarization

originating from the SEC accepting these revisions could be found in these documents, and a search at the SEC records in Mandaluyong City indicates that there are no such files, which either means that these documents were never filed with the SEC, or if they were, were misplaced, and not acted upon.⁸⁸ Hence, the 1986 revised By-Laws are not in legal effect. Thus, by 1987 the AAP still had to follow the 1952 By-Laws, in all its originary—if somewhat anachronistic—glory.

The questions that are to be begged as a result of these actions are: What were the polemics involved in the reconfiguration of the AAP? What were the felt inadequacies of interest that the AAP could no longer accommodate, that allowed for this “revolutionary” situation of revising the AAP By-Laws to occur as a matter of conventional agreement between members? What was the state of the electorate that decided upon this fragmentation? And finally, what was won, and lost, in the attempt at such a reconfiguration?

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Notes

¹ As defined by Arthur Danto (1964), the artworld refers to a set of theoretical assumptions that precludes the practice of naming a theory of art within a pre-realized grid of art theorems, and is so interpellated based on an *a priori* position based on the self-realization of the namer as agent of the institutional field of art. Hence, any theory of art, co-existing among numerous other theories of art, is equally justified for as long as any namer of the art theory can justify their existence as a member of an artworld.

² An interesting subtextual uncertainty is injected in the cover letter of the said documents, exhumed from the SEC archives. Dated March 26, 1952, and written by then assistant for Securities & Corporation Division Dionisio Guevara, and addressed to Mr. Vicente G. Javier (presumably the corporate counsel of the AAP), it informs the AAP to "send a representative to this Commission at your earliest convenience for conference...Pending compliance herewith, action on said papers will be held in abeyance." No subsequent documentation appears that casts further light on this tantalizing document, which at first glance seems to cast some uncertainty on the legality of the AAP's 1952 registration with SEC.

³ The category Poster Art was included within the context of the AAP's 2nd Watercolor Exhibition, held on 15 September 1952 at the Chamber of Commerce Showroom. The first prize for Poster was won by the late National Artist J. Elizalde Navarro for his work "Mindanao," which was shown at the 1998 "GINTO: 50 Years of the AAP" retrospective exhibition. Interestingly, other categories of the non-traditional fine arts were also offered, such as Calendar and Greeting Cards. There were also other traditional categories, such as Painting and Graphic Arts, of which the Painting Category already shows an indication of epistemic entropy through its distinction between Conservative and Modern.

⁴ In his essay "Utopias and the Market," Canclini outlines four key projects of modernity: the emancipating project, which is "the secularization of cultural fields, the self-expressive and self-regulated production of symbolic goods, and their development in autonomous markets;" the

expansive project, which is “the tendency of modernity that seeks to extend the knowledge and possession of nature, and the production, circulation, and consumption of goods;” the renovating project, which is composed of two frequently complementing aspects, “the pursuit of constant improvement and innovation proper to a relation to nature and society that is liberated from all sacred prescription over how the world must be,” and “the need to continually reformulate the signs of distinction that mass consumption wears away;” and finally the democratizing project, that “trusts in education, the diffusion of art, and specialized knowledge to achieve rational and moral evolution” (Canclini 1995, 12-13). These projects are seen as mutually reinforcing and massively deployed across society in order to achieve its aims at the soonest available moment. As is often the case, these projects of modernity are aimed at underdeveloped—and often postcolonial—nations so as to accelerate the pace of modernization, and rationalize the international distribution of goods, services, and labor that typifies modern transnational economies of the mid-late 20th Century that replaced the imperial system of metropolises-and-colonies of the late-19th Century. That Canclini uses these projects of modernity to critique the relationship between labor, capital, and consumption in the underdeveloped South of Latin America comes back to remind us that these projects are intuited using a Western-centered vision of history and economy, that does not take into account political, economic, and social discrepancies of local societies, and the resiliency of traditional cultures to resist modernization. For additional insights, see Canclini 1995, 12-65.

⁵ AAP 1952a, 3. In addition, Sections 13-18 of the 1952 By-Laws specify that at least five of the eleven elected Board Members at large be elected as officers, constituting at least the following: President, Vice-President (of which more than one can in fact be elected), Secretary, Treasurer, and Historian. The six or so remaining Board Members are then designated as “Directors.”

⁶ AAP 1986, 7. The relevant number is found in Article 7, Section 1. In Article 8, Section 1, the pertinent section reads: “The officers of the association shall be a President, a First Vice-President, a Second Vice-President, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and such other officers as may be appointed by the Board of Directors, each of whom shall have such authority and perform such duties as the Board may from time to time determine.”

⁷ AAP 1952b, 4-5. Section 20 states that the following are standing committees: Exhibition, Selection, Membership, Publicity, Program, Donations, on Judges, and Special Committees which the President may appoint “as the occasion demands.”

⁸ These are based upon Lay-Ann Orlina’s account of the Association’s attempt to clarify its legal status through inquiries with the SEC between 1998 to late 1999.