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## Gerard Lico

Editor-in-Chief

### *Of Beauty and Light*

The University of the Philippines College of Architecture (UPCA) is thrilled to unveil the *Sanyata Journal: Journal of Creative Works of the Philippine Built Environment*. This inaugural issue marks the beginning of a platform dedicated to showcasing and exploring the exceptional creative works shaping the Philippine architectural landscape.

Sanyata, an Ilocano term for “beauty and light,” embodies the essence of this journal. The Sanyata Journal serves as a conduit for disseminating a diverse range of creative outputs, fostering a dynamic dialogue around the various facets of the Philippine built environment. This includes the disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, and urban and environmental design.

Patrick Canteros’s article on Casa Floria meticulously restored by Gerard Lico and the team ARC Lico in San Juan, Manila is a quintessential example of the early 20th century colonial architectural hybridity. Its demolition would have been a devastating loss, erasing a vital piece of the city’s historical

narrative. The article explores how ARC Lico transformed Casa Floria while retaining its soul. Their commitment to reusing original materials and implementing a layout that safeguards the home’s exterior facade is a testament to their dedication to marrying the past with the present.

Meanwhile, Madonna Danao’s article on Bulacan Capitol Plaza delves into the transformation of civic space, examining its newfound role as a vibrant connector, not just physically, but also culturally. Danao’s work traces the Plaza’s journey from a park exhibiting signs of wear and tear to a revitalized space optimized for accessibility, functionality, and aesthetics.

The article of Leonido Gines Jr. on the Freedom Memorial Museum Gallery meticulously unpacks the intricate dialogue between architects, artists, curators, and human rights advocates. Their collective vision sought to evoke a powerful tapestry of emotions and ideas, weaving together concepts like victims, human rights, text, mood, and the very essence of freedom itself. The essay underscores a captivating

notion: designing freedom transcends the realm of physical construction. It is a process, an event that ignites a crucial discourse on spatial justice for designers.

Mark Jeremy G. Narag and Maricor N. Soriano's article on turning historical architectural designs into line art using Artificial Intelligence (AI), delves into the innovative application of artificial intelligence for the efficient and meticulous conversion of historical architectural designs into clean line art. The cornerstone of this research lies in the inherent challenges associated with the physical deterioration of historical architectural plans. As these invaluable documents age, they become susceptible to yellowing, staining, and general wear and tear. While traditional methods, such as manual editing in software like Photoshop, offer a solution for individual designs, the sheer volume of historical archives necessitates a more scalable approach.

Markel Cesar A. Luna's conservation management plan for the Benitez Hall of the UP College of Education delves between preserving heritage and adapting to evolving needs within the built environment. Luna unveils the building's history and its enduring role within the university's identity. Through Luna's insightful analysis, we gain a deeper understanding of how such plans can breathe new life into cherished structures, ensuring their continued relevance for future generations.

The article on the Mobile and Portable Specimen Collection Unit with Biosafety Feature and Other COVID-Related Design Responses of John Ernest Jose, Richard Martin Rinen, and Cristoper Stonewall Espina shows innovative design solutions developed by a team from the University of the Philippines (UP) College of Architecture and UP College of Public Health in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This mobile and portable unit addresses the critical need for efficient and accessible COVID-19 testing during a period marked by transportation limitations, healthcare worker shortages, and overwhelmed hospitals. The article details the design principles behind the specimen collection unit (SCU) highlighting its focus on biosafety.

John Brian de Asis's book review on Lorelei de Viana's *Manila from Within: Book Review of Walk Manila* shows that De Viana's work transcends the typical tourist guide, offering a fresh perspective on the city's built environment. Her focus extends beyond iconic landmarks like the Manila Metropolitan Theater and Far Eastern University, delving into the quiet charm of often-overlooked treasures like the funerary monuments of the Manila North Cemetery. *Walk Manila* offers a collection of thoughtfully curated "tour circuits," encouraging readers to engage with the city on a more personal level.

Edgar Allan Sembrano's book review on *Architectural Guide Manila* takes you to Bianca Weeko Martin's insightful guide through the city's rich history, from Spanish colonial times to contemporary design. The book explores Metro Manila's rich architectural heritage with essays and photos that describe Metro Manila's built environment.

The book review of Albert Julius Aycardo Jr. on *Siglo 20: A Century of Style and Design in the Philippines* describes how Lico's book paints a vivid picture of how artists navigated their changing world from architecture to fashion, film to media. The book review shows how design became a language for Filipinos to express their evolving identities, aspirations, and cultural perspectives.