



Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi: Shifts in Context

March 8 to June 3, 2018

Gallery XVII

National Museum of Fine Arts

© National Museum of the Philippines and Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi, 2018.

All rights reserved. No part of this catalog may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the National Museum of the Philippines, except in non-commercial uses permitted by the Intellectual Property Law.

Front cover image:

Untitled II

Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi

1969 • 14 x 16.5 cm

Collection of the National Museum

Introduction to the Exhibition

by Ana Maria Theresa P. Labrador, Ph.D.

The hitherto hidden gems of prints by Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi (b. 1942) in the National Fine Arts Collection (NFAC) have now been revealed in her new exhibition “Shifts in Context.” Created when the artist was 25 years old and won the first prize at the annual exhibition and competition of the Printmakers Association of the Philippines in 1969, the mainly black and white works—*Framed* and two *Untitled*—may seem small but when set with matboards appear as trio of windows to an unfamiliar world, both embossed and printed.

None of those in the exhibition are as monochromatic as those held by the National Museum of the Philippines except the 9 of 19 drawing and proofs of *Retablo* from the Ambeth Ocampo Collection that demonstrate the processes of Gelvezon-Tequi’s etchings. The rest of those 31 artworks shown here are infused with colors that refer to her milieu, growing up in Iloilo, educated in the Philippines, US and Europe, as well as living in Paris and then in Limeuil, southwest France, where her family moved after the work retirement of her husband Marc Tequi. She has also mastered the painstaking application of viscosity color printing on which layers of tints effect a mood or action, depending on the treatment wherein her chosen hues are applied on a plate and then run under a press once.

Unlike the three prints in the NFAC, those selected for this exhibition by Gelvezon-Tequi include figures and recognizable images. None of them are abstract or focused on form. Even her 1980s series of etchings on the *Apocalypse* of which she alluded to a pinball machine—an entertaining game that has lost its appeal to young people these days and requires the player to control the probability of chance—include elements that are still identifiable although their symbols lost to those inexperienced in the context that shaped it. In a sense, what has replaced those monochromatic prints are the colorful vignettes but without losing their solemnity, critical consideration and wit while full of outward biblical references or folk religious rituals.

Gelvezon-Tequi in every sense has been a game-changer in a male-dominated art world and her insistence to master printmaking is admirable, especially etching with viscosity color print, that is laborious and yet no match for

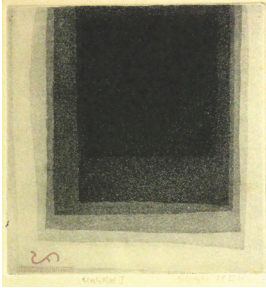
the market and consumption of painting in the Philippine context. Her commitment to her craft despite the odds, the risk-taking to shift from printmaking to painting and then printmaking again, make her one of the female artist leaders of our time. Inventive, unafraid of change and mindful always of her origins and references despite her journeys both physical and metaphysical, allude to our Women's Month campaign in 2018.

The exhibition's title "Shifts in Context" resonates with 2018 women's month theme of making change work for women. Gelvezon-Tequi's art and her experiences as one of the successful women artists today are testaments to the adaptability and strength of women to prevail and prosper despite the vagaries and challenges that come their way. Featuring both prints and paintings, the exhibition features the artist's partiality to prints as she is "fascinated by the intermediate physical and chemical processes that one has to go through, suffer or master."

Catalog of Works

PRINTS

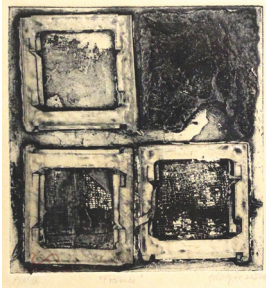
Early Works



Untitled I

1969 • Aquatint • 14 x 16.5 cm
Collection of the National Museum

Aquatint is a technique in *intaglio* etching wherein grains of resin are sprinkled on a plate, then heated to make the grains adhere to the metal and placed in an acid bath. The acid bites around the grains and these tiny furrows will serve to hold the ink when printing. Aquatints are used mainly to achieve tonal values. In this print, the artist had the acid bite the plate in different lengths of time, thus achieving different values.



Frames

1968 • Collagraph • 10.5 x 16.5 cm
Collection of the National Museum

Frames was made by the artist while she was taking her Special Studies in Graphic Arts at the Pratt Institute in New York in 1968. The artist chanced upon some slide frames on the ground and decided to make a composition out of it through a collagraph print. A collagraph is made by sticking together materials on a plate, like a collage, using glue (Greek word *koll* or *kolla*) and drawing (graph) on the plate to enhance the design before running it through a press to create the resulting image.



Untitled II

1969 • Embossing • 14 x 16.5 cm
Collection of the National Museum

An embossing is simply made either by subjecting a copper plate to an acid bath, or by laying-out materials with varying depths on a plate. The plate is then run through a press without inking and a white image is imprinted onto a damp paper.

Self-Portraits/The Sta. Ofelia Cycle



Sta. Ofelia Virgen y Martir 16/30

1984 ■ Etching, viscosity color printing ■ 32 x 30 cm
Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

This self-portrait evolved from a series of *Estampitas* into a tongue-in-cheek *Sta. Ofelia, Virgen y Martir*, where the artist is surrounded by elements portraying her as a printmaker—a nitric acid bath, the wheel of a press, a scraper, a burnisher and other tools used for etching.



Detail from Santa Ofelia Cycle 15/25

1985 ■ Etching, viscosity color printing ■ 46 x 50 cm
Collection of the Artist (not in the exhibition)

Done in 1985, this print is part of the series the artist calls *Sta. Ofelia Cycle*. In this particular work, images of a wheelchair pushed by an angel/nurse, the wheel of the artist's etching press, and bedridden woman attached to intravenous tubes reflect the artist's meditation on the fragility of life and reflections on her own mortality.



Sudarium 16/25

1984 ■ Etching, viscosity color printing ■ 28 x 24 cm
Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

The title of this work refers to the piece of cloth Saint Veronica offers to Christ on the way to His crucifixion. He leaves an imprint of His face on the cloth. The artist's self-portrait, in a gesture of Saint Veronica displays an imprint which could be taken as a homage to Ninoy Aquino after the assassination of the former senator. A face (Ninoy's?) is silhouetted on a bull's eye while around the target is the cryptic phrase "*mahirap tumakbong mas matulin sa bala.*"

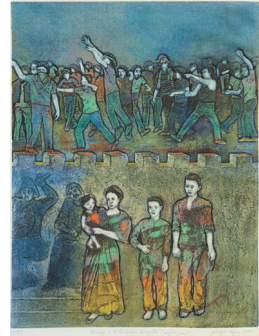


Detail from the Sta. Ofelia Cycle (2)

1984 ■ Etching, viscosity color printing
Collection of the Artist (not in the exhibition)

The Santa Ofelia series was conceived by the artist as some sort of "archaeological" discovery of hidden frescoes in the life of this unknown saint. This detail follows the saint's death and she is here twice as a *gisante*—the reclined figure on a tomb. However she is also depicted as an *orante*, resurrected, proud and triumphant, with the classic palm of martyrdom while the other hand holds a mirror, a cheeky critique of her vanity.

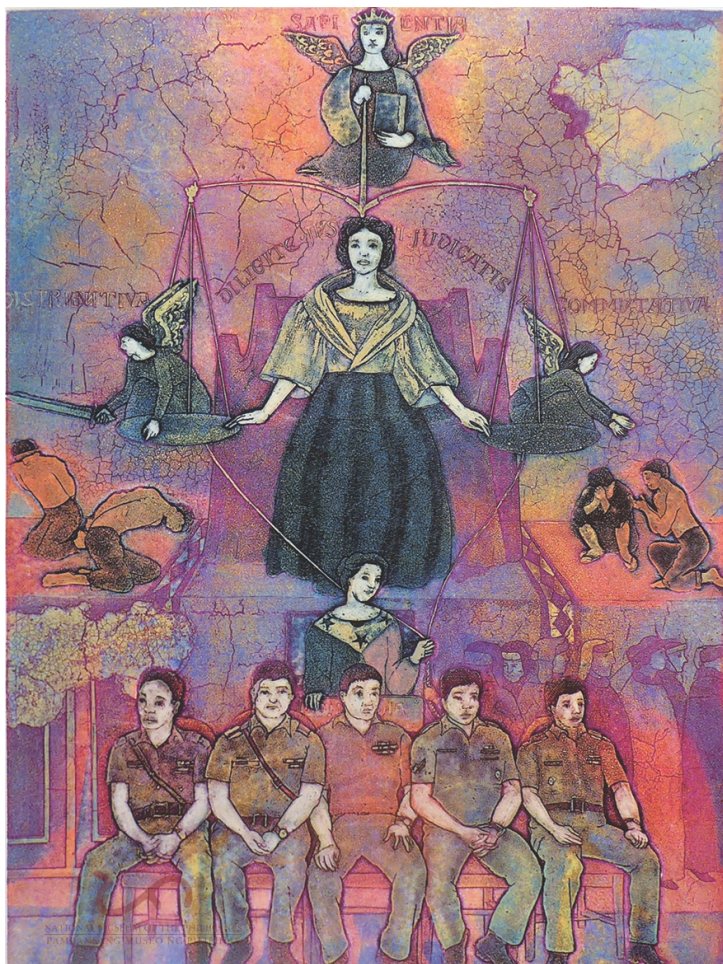
Homage to Ambrogio Lorenzetti



Homage II to Ambrogio Lorenzetti 3/25

1987 • Etching, viscosity color printing
Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

This triptych is inspired by Ambrogio Lorenzetti's (ca. 1290- 1348) frescoes in Siena's *Palazzo Pubblico* showing the allegory of *Bad Government*. Seated in the middle panel is the tyrant surrounded by vices of vanity, pride and greed. On his left is a crocodile, which in Philippine context, symbolizes corrupt and greedy politicians, the *buwaya*. On his right is a skeleton that stands for violence and death. A mysterious armed figure is on the left foreground while "advisers" sneak away on the right. The left panel of the triptych shows the effects of bad government in the countryside with the farmers working in the fields on the upper portion and the politicians on the lower portion holding a piece of paper, another visual pun "*nagpapapel*." The different social sectors are divided by a wall. The right panel on the other hand illustrates the effects of bad government in the city where there are protests and violence as seen in the upper portion of the panel. A family in 19th century clothing seem to imply their historic roles as victims.



Homage to Ambrogio Lorenzetti

1987 • Etching, viscosity color printing

Collection of the Artist (not in the exhibition)

The artist used a detail of the Siena Lorenzetti fresco, the allegory of Justice, and it becomes in this print a Philippine transposition. The central figure in Maria Clara dress tips the scales of Justice equally. Justice has two aspects—one punitive, the other commutative, and cords from the scales are gathered in the hands of a woman, presumably Ynang Bayan dressed in the Philippine flag. The cord is held by figures on the right leading to the part where Good Government reigns, in concord. In the foreground are the five soldiers accused of assassinating Senator Benigno Aquino. The Latin phrase above the Maria Clara advises: love justice you who rule the world.



Homage III to Ambrogio Lorenzetti

(Left and center panels: 3/25; right panel: 19/25)

1987 • Etching, viscosity color printing

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

This triptych, again derived from the Lorenzetti frescoes, shows the allegory of *Good Government*. The center panel is the benevolent ruler surrounded by virtues and is perhaps the artist's wish for her country as suggested by the seal of the President of the Philippines. The ruler is seated between *Magnanimitas* (Magnanimity) and *Prudentia* (Prudence) which are the virtues of having great mind and heart, and having good judgement. Above them are the three cardinal virtues of Faith, Charity and Hope. A reigning ambiance of peace is suggested by the sleeping woman and babes playing with animals as described in the Bible. The left panel shows *Libertas* (Liberty) and *Fortitudo* (Fortitude) with soldiers and civilians below them, implying liberty to the pursuit of happiness in the dancing couple and police power tempered by justice. The right panel shows *Temperantia* (Temperance) and *Justitia* (Justice) from whose hands spring the harmony among people holding a cord, again a play with words—*con cordia*.

Apocalypse Series



Sacra Conversazione

1980 • Etching, viscosity color printing
Collection of the Artist (not in the exhibition)

This print is actually an introduction to the *Apocalypse Series*. Here is another self-portrait of the artist dazzled by the predictions in St. John's doomsday text. It is a conversation, the artist talking to herself, and the series of prints that follow are her reflections and commentaries on this visionary text.



The First Horseman

1980 ▪ Etching, viscosity color printing
Collection of the Artist (not in the exhibition)

As the other prints in the *Apocalypse Series*, the artist uses the pinball game format to contrast with the gravity of the text. The First Horseman riding a white horse personifies Conquest. He wears the conqueror's crown and is armed with a bow and arrow. His domination is underscored by the vivid red color scheme of this print composed on a fragment of a target, a bulls-eye. The soldiers on the target arches show the evolution of Philippine Constabulary uniforms, a wink to the artist's military family background.



The Second Horseman

1980 ▪ Etching, viscosity color printing
Collection of the Artist (not in the exhibition)

The Second Horseman is War, riding a red horse and brandishing a sword who leaves death and destruction in his wake. Conflict seems to be an endless and repetitive human activity, be it in the past as with the warring angels or in the bombs of the future *Star Wars*.



The Third Horseman 23/25

1980 • Etching, viscosity color printing • 39 x 30 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

Riding a black horse, the Third Horseman is Famine. He holds a scale, not of justice but of men's inequality regarding their different means to deal with this plague. The shadowy figures in the background have lost, their game is over.



The Fourth Horseman 13/25

1980 • Etching, viscosity color printing • 39 x 39 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

The Fourth Horseman is generally thought of to be Death, riding a pale horse. In the foreground are disfigured bodies, the crippled, the diseased in a perverse race towards their inevitable "home."



Michael and the Beasts

1984 • Etching, viscosity color printing
 Loaned from the Collection of the Artist
 (not in the exhibition)

As in the other prints of this series, images here were inspired by the 8th century Spanish monk Beato de Liébana known for his *Commentaries on the Apocalypse*. The artist composes a colorful struggle between angels and devils for souls who have to choose between good and evil. St Michael, the militant archangel, strikes down evil before man's game is over.



Exterminating Angel 24/25

1980 • Etching, viscosity color printing • 39 x 30 cm
 Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

The medieval saints shoot lasers while the Almighty on high is in a completely different sphere. The dark wing-like background is also suggestive of the mushroom cloud of destruction.



Towards the Day of Judgment 16/25

1980 • Etching, viscosity color printing • 39 x 30 cm
 Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

The *Apocalypse Series* is loosely inspired by the writings of St. John, on visions and prophecies of things to pass. Images used by the artist fuse medieval iconography with pinball machines and electronic games. In this work, the artist speculates with predictions as to how the world may end, how it moves towards the countdown.



A Tenth of the City

1980 • Etching, viscosity color printing • 39 x 39 cm
 Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

Here is a visual interpretation of admonitions to repent that aren't heard, a tenth of the city will perish in destruction. Space invaders have taken the place of avenging angels and the dead spin unrested in their coffins.

Printmaking Process

The artist demonstrates the different stages of making a viscosity color print through one of her works, *Predella*.

She starts by drawing her design on tracing paper. The image is transferred on to her plate, covered by an acid-resistant varnish, by running it through the press. The image transferred on the plate would be in reverse to the drawing on the tracing paper. These lines, bitten by the acid, would serve as the structure of the print.

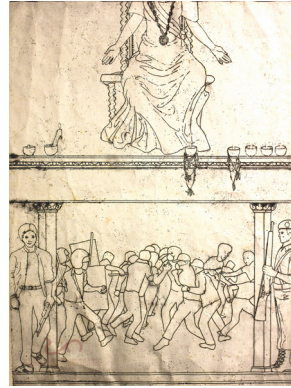
The first proof is made up of lines which will change and evolve as the working process goes through.



Predella

1984 • Etching, viscosity color printing
Sketch transferred to drafting paper

Loaned from the Collection of Ambeth R. Ocampo



Predella

1984 • Etching, viscosity color printing
First proof

Loaned from the Collection of Ambeth R. Ocampo



Predella

1984 • Etching, viscosity color printing
Proof after deep biting and scraping

Loaned from the Collection of Ambeth R. Ocampo

The next steps would consist of deep biting, that is exposing different parts of the plate to acid so that the result would create different levels necessary for the viscosity color printing.

The acid leaves deposits on the plate which may not be desirable so these are scraped.



Predella

1984 ▪ Etching, viscosity color printing

Working proofs with aquatints, scraping and burnishing

Loaned from the Collection of Ambeth R. Ocampo

When the artist is satisfied with the different levels achieved, textures and values are then added. Values are created mainly by aquatint, with resin grains of different sizes applied consecutively. Several aquatints may be used one after the other. The aquatint can again be scraped to get the desired value and in the process, an interesting texture can be created.

Thus several proofs may be pulled after each technique used.



Predella

1984 • Etching, viscosity color printing

Working proofs in colors

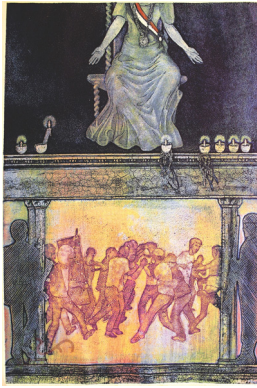
Loaned from the Collection of Ambeth R. Ocampo

When the black and white proofs prove satisfactory, the next steps would be to find the “good” colors for this print.

Color viscosity printing consists of three important requirements. First of all, the plate must have different levels on which the colors will be deposited. This is achieved in the early stages of working on the plate by deep biting.

The second necessary element would be the use of rollers, the hardest roller being used first and the softest last.

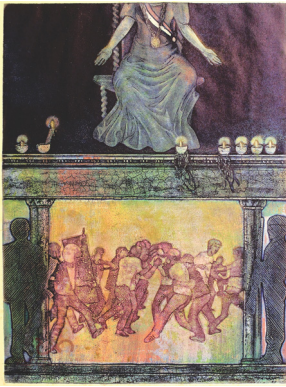
The third imperative condition would be mixing of the different colors by adding more or less linseed oil to each color, thus changing their viscosities. The most liquid color would be deposited first on the plate using the hardest roller. The least liquid color would be deposited on the plate last using the softest roller. Even if the colors are laid on the plate one after the other, the fact that they have different viscosities will keep them from mixing with each other. It will be noted that the softest roller will deposit its color on the “deepest” parts of the plate.



Predella

1984 ▪ Etching, viscosity color printing
Actual inked plate

Loaned from the Collection of Ambeth R. Ocampo

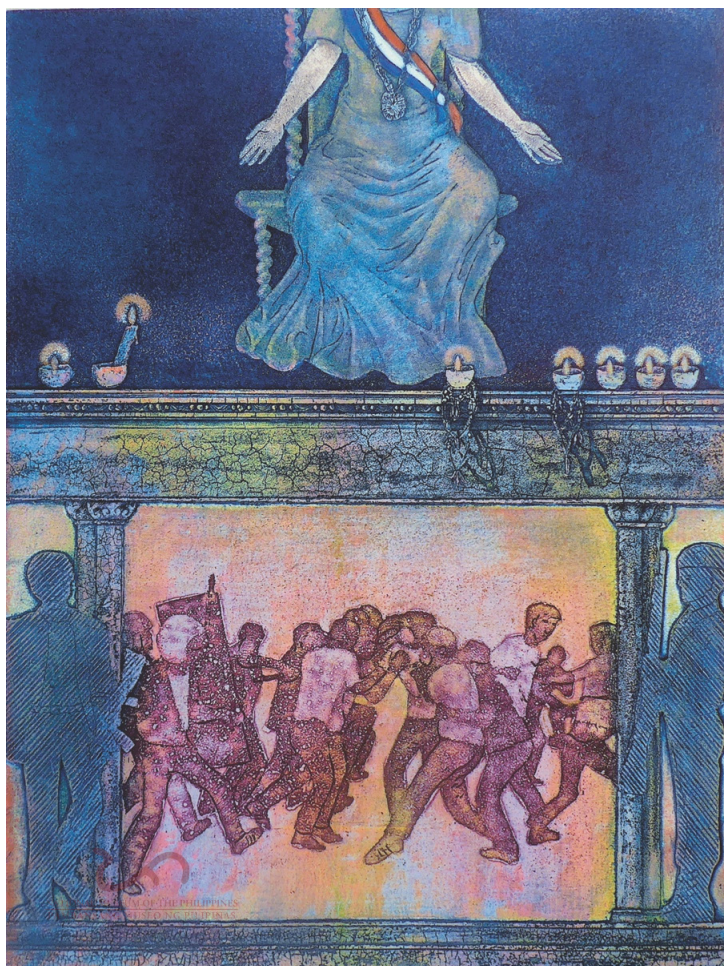


Predella

1984 ▪ Etching, viscosity color printing
Final proof (*bon à tirer*)

Loaned from the Collection of Ambeth R. Ocampo

When the colors are found to be satisfactory, this proof is then called the *bon à tirer* (press ready) often indicated by a "B.A.T." Then the edition is pulled (printed), signed and numbered. The numbering is indicated by a fraction. The lower number being the total number of prints pulled and the upper is the number of that particular print. The A/P (artist's proof) is a limited number reserved for the artist, normally 10% of the total edition. After the printing of the whole edition, the plate should be destroyed so as to avoid restrikes.



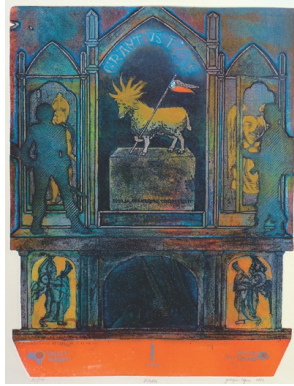
Predella

1984 • Etching, viscosity color printing

Sample from the actual edition (4/25)

Loaned from the Collection of Ambeth R. Ocampo

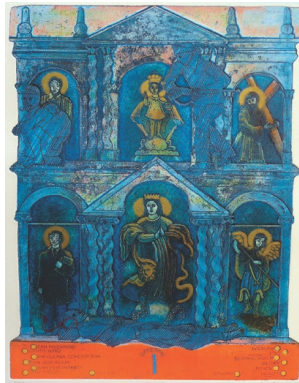
The title “*Predella*” usually refers to small paintings at the base of a raised platform or an altarpiece. This “*Predella*” depicts an enthronement of a lady in majesty with her head deliberately truncated. The tri-colored sash of the headless figure wears suggests her importance, her dominating role, but she is ignorant to the turmoil below. At the base of the platform are the seven lamps of wisdom, not giving off any light nor glow. Below is a scene of protest, of violence with impassive armed silhouettes. This is the artist’s commentary on the socio-political climate of the times.



Retablo

1984 ■ Etching, viscosity color printing
 Loaned from the Collection of the Artist
 (not in the exhibition)

The violence and destruction of XXth century armed conflict portrayed here is a continuing theme of the *Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. The pinball format again underscores the importance of the coin—money that fuels and is also the cause of conflicts. The altar with the Holy Lamb is desecrated by soldiers standing on it. The prayer for peace is unheeded, shattered by a shell or bomb.



Altar Mayor

1984 ■ Etching, viscosity color printing
 Loaned from the Collection of the Artist
 (not in the exhibition)

This print is the artist's commentary on prayer. On the altar are enthroned saints, heroes and even politicians. On the panel at the bottom are operating instructions. One selects a wish, a desire then chooses to whom this request is addressed, all done by pushing a button and the necessary dropping of the coin in the slot. When we pray, we plead, cajole, bargain, buy, bribe to receive the favor from the powers that be. This theme of prayer is taken up again in a later print, *My Heart's Desire*.



SelfImages 14/25

1980 ▪ Etching, viscosity color printing ▪ 31 x 33 cm
Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

Self-Images is an evaluation and a question of how we see ourselves. The artist used a slot machine for the viewer to play on his desired identity. A tiny mirror on top of the machine is placed for the viewer to see his real identity but when a coin is inserted, is the desired image really attained? Does chance and money really determine what is wished for?



Play Station 24/25

2001 ▪ Etching, viscosity color printing ▪ 41 x 49 cm
Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

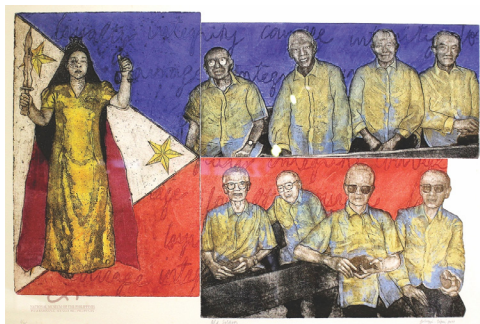
Filipino games such as *piko*, *tumbang preso*, *salagubang*, *jolens*, *tansan*, *patintero*, *luksong tinik*, *gagamba* and *lastiko* are games of yesteryears with *luksong tinik* highlighted in this etching. These old games show a contrast with the use of today's PlayStation games.



My Heart's Desire 7/25

2001 ■ Etching, viscosity color printing ■ 38 x 41 cm
Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

My Heart's Desire is another game of life where once again a coin is needed to make the choice. Candles are lit to ensure that prayers and wishes are heard. The desired is perhaps unattainable as prefigured by the split dragon but the encouragement is there to try again.



Old Soldiers 8/25

2000 • Etching, viscosity color printing • 34 x 53 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

Done by the artist as homage to her father, this work shows her father's classmates from the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) who attended his wake. On the Philippine flag are the PMA's motto of Loyalty, Integrity and Courage. *Inang Bayan* (Mother of the Nation) too has aged, perhaps now tired but still struggles to balance justice and integrity.



Visions of Bodhisattva 8/25

2000 • Etching, viscosity color printing • 34 x 54 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

On the left foreground is a former Philippine President personifying government leaders in general. He is engrossed with virtual reality, blind to the actual reality of a distraught mother with her children on the opposite side. The highlighted Tibetan word "compassion" is in a language that he does not understand. This is the artist's indictment of the insensitivity of political leaders towards the plight of the common people.

PAINTINGS

Religious reference

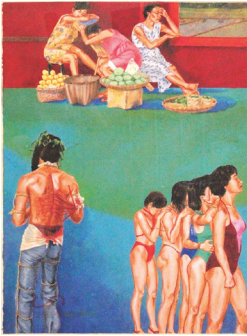
Marriage at Cana

1993 ■ Acrylic on canvas ■ 79 x 103 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist



The artist, in many of her paintings, portray Biblical scenes transposed in a Philippine setting. She imagines if Christ were a Filipino, he would appear as one of the ordinary people. In this transposition of the *Marriage at Cana*, Mary is probably the old woman behind with the village women who help in the preparation of the feast. A couple dances, relatives pose with the married couple as here is a scene typical of simple Filipino weddings. These, as in other works, are the artist's way of elevating, even sanctifying the simple, the ordinary.



The Second Sorrowful Mystery

1995 ■ Acrylic on rag paper ■ 78 x 56 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

The Second Sorrowful Mystery of the rosary is the *Scourging at the Pillar* or the flagellation of Christ. The flagellant here is often the village "sinner" who wants his sins pardoned through self-flagellation during Holy Week. The women vendors, the parade of scantily clad women are symbolically beaten too by poverty and shame.

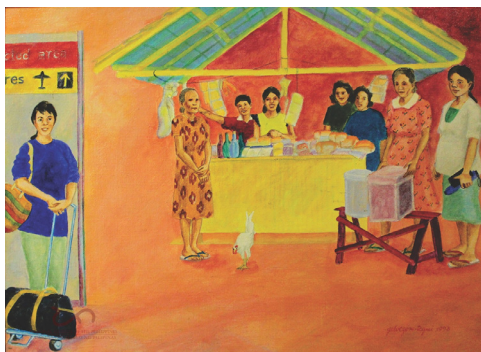


The Fourth Sorrowful Mystery

1995 ■ Acrylic on rag paper ■ 80 x 96 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

The Fourth Sorrowful Mystery of the rosary is the *Carrying of the Cross*. The reenactment of this mystery is in the person of a Black Nazarene of Quiapo devotee carrying his cross. The profound faith of Filipinos is perhaps shown here. A woman on the left weighed with worries has her cross to bear and, like the young girl, seeks comfort in the Church.



The Second Joyful Mystery

1993 • Acrylic on linen • 65 x 80 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

The Second Joyful Mystery is the Visitation. Mary here is embodied by a woman who could possibly be an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW), returning to her family after years of being away. Family and friends prepare a feast for her homecoming. At the sari-sari store with the other women is her pregnant cousin Elizabeth looking on at her arrival.

Another version of this *Second Joyful Mystery* is in the Ateneo de Manila Collection.

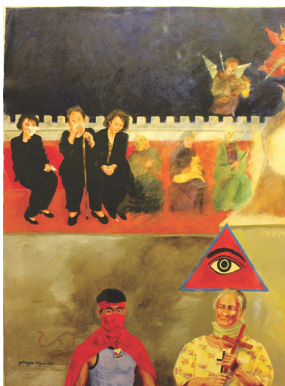


The Third Joyful Mystery

1993 • Acrylic on linen • 65 x 80 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

The Nativity as narrated in the gospels of Luke and Matthew is translated by the artist again in a Filipino setting. The Biblical oxen, cow and sheep are replaced by a carabao mounted by a "shepherd," a yoked cow, and a yellow dog. Mary carries her newborn sleeping son with her Filipino Joseph at her side. On his tee-shirt is an image of San Lucas, the evangelist who recounted the Nativity story.



Allegory I

1995 ▪ Acrylic on rag paper ▪ 78 x 64 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

The compositions of these *Allegories* are reminiscent of the Lorenzetti frescoes on *Bad Government*. Featured are the ills in a dystopian society in the images of grieving widows, a masked cult follower, an all-seeing eye.

This work was included in the exhibition “Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi Paintings and Prints” at the *Bulwagan ng Dangal*, University of the Philippines in 2012.



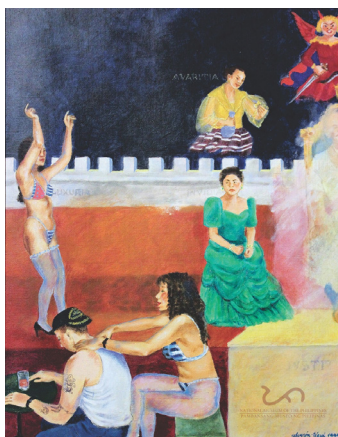
Allegory II

1995 ▪ Acrylic on rag paper ▪ 78 x 56 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

Elevated as if on a stage to emphasize their status are a go-go dancer and a soldier while below are ordinary people seeking the fragile protection of umbrellas from contamination of perverted values.

This work was included in the exhibition “Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi Paintings and Prints” at the *Bulwagan ng Dangal*, University of the Philippines in 2012.



Allegory I

1995 ▪ Acrylic on rag paper ▪ 45 x 36 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

As in the other allegories, the vices, in this case “vainglory,” hovers over an impassive society matron, blind to a scene of a scantily clad dancer, a bar girl, and her foreign client.



Allegory II

1995 ▪ Acrylic on rag paper ▪ 45 x 36 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

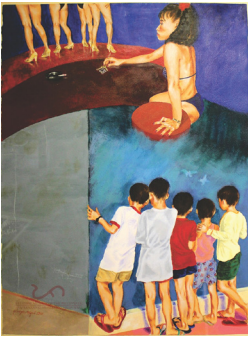
A man, dressed in his impeccable *barong*, is surrounded by the fabled crocodile and the lapdog (*tuta*). The military figure is still another symbol of authority and power. The artist does not tell a story in these allegories nor does she furnish a convenient key to decipher the meaning of her paintings. It is left to the viewer to arrive at his own moral lesson or conclusion.



Class Picture

1998 ▪ Acrylic on linen ▪ 78 x 64 cm
Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

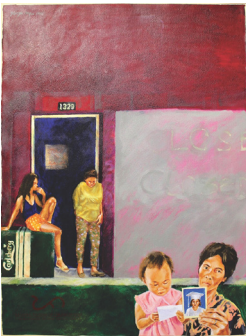
Again the artist employs an allegory to convey her statement on poverty. Poor children pose for a class picture dressed in what is their best. Their faces are grim and uncertain instead of glowing and smiling. Apparently their future of suffering seems to be foretold by this enthroned *Pieta*.



Goal

1995 ▪ Acrylic on rag paper ▪ 78 x 56 cm
Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

This work describes the artist's commentary on the loss of values. The upper part of the painting shows a woman, scantily clad, sitting beside a table of entertainers with their bared legs and high-heeled shoes. Below are five young boys peering through the glass. All of these suggest the values we uphold and the values slowly slipping away.



Where Why How

1995 ▪ Acrylic on rag paper ▪ 78 x 56 cm
Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

The artist has always been vocal of her political sentiments regarding poverty, corruption and greed. In this acrylic painting, a woman, perhaps a grandmother, is holding a baby and a graduation photograph of her daughter perhaps mother of the child. In the background are two women in front of a squalid entrance which could perhaps be a brothel. Relating the two scenes, this painting shows the repercussions of poverty on simple people especially on women. Like the grandmother, we ask ourselves these painful questions.



Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados

1998 • Acrylic on linen • 78 x 64 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados (Our Lady of the Abandoned) adopts the classic formula of placing the Virgin and Child on a pedestal surrounded by saints. But in this painting, she is the Madonna of the poor and the forgotten. The tapestry behind her is a thin blanket omnipresent in less fortunate Filipino households. Begging children and a mad woman represent the realities of poverty in the country.



Night Day, Here There

1995 • Acrylic on canvas • 78 x 56 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

Night Day, Here There shows the plight and hardships of the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). The upper portion shows again the flagellant, inflicting wounds on himself symbolic of the painful menial work he is forced to do. Opposite him is a person, a woman? A transvestite? Selling his/her body. Both figures embody the suffering and hardship these workers endure. In the foreground is a smiling mother surrounded by a large refrigerator, a television set, a radio and a shelf with family photos and mementos which portray her now comfortable life. The painting begs the question: are these material goods and perhaps social ascension worth all the pain?



Idols

1995 • Acrylic on canvas • 105 x 89 cm

Loaned from the Collection of the Artist

This painting summarizes in a gentle critique the folk devotions of the Filipinos. In the center is a religious leader of a native cult. On his right side are beauty queens symbolizing the Filipino obsession of superficial beauty pageants. Contrast is created with *Inang Bayan* who is tired, having aged and is no longer an idealized image of the adored country. In the foreground are people feasting, dancing, singing, all personifying the happy go lucky, *bahala na* attitude.

Artist Profile

Printmaker Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi has been critically acclaimed as one of the Philippines' pioneering printmakers. Hoping to have a career in journalism, she initially took up Bachelor of Arts in English at the University of the Philippines. However, because of her deep interest in the arts, she also obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts. After finishing her undergraduate studies, she earned a Diploma in Painting at the *Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma* in Italy, and pursued Special Studies in Graphic Arts at the Pratt Institute in New York City, USA through the Rockefeller Foundation Scholarship.

Her membership of the *Confluence des Arts et des Savoirs* in Limeuil, France and the Director of the Art Association of the Philippines are among her accomplishments. While at the University of the Philippines, she was also a member of the President's Council on the Arts and taught Humanities.

Gelvezon-Tequi has received various local and international recognitions which among the more recent include a Gold Medal for Printmaking from the Art Association of the Philippines (1982), the Michiko Takamatsu Prize (2002) and the Lucien and Suzanne Jonas Prize (2003), both for *Salon des Artistes Français*, Espace Auteuil in Paris, France. Moreover, she was conferred the *Pamana ng Pilipino* Award, a Presidential Award for Outstanding Overseas Filipinos by President Benigno Aquino III in 2014.

Acknowledgements

Prof. Ambeth R. Ocampo

Maileen P. Rondal

NM Gender and Development Committee

Curatorial Team


Jeremy R. Barns
Ana Maria Theresa P. Labrador, Ph.D.
Marcelo V. Cercado
Ceres Marie P. Canilao
Caroline Marie D. Duque
Gilbert D. Miguel
Danelyn S. Sumaylo
Miriam Hannah S. Bordallo
Mariah Camille T. Calanno
Jonalyn N. Cornelio
Erline S. Millar
Michelle S. Nacion
Pamela Rose Soriano
Andresito R. Orencio
Allan O. Manaloto
Ariel R. Hernandez
Samuel B. Nazareno
Allan O. Mabag
Richard T. Solento


Editorial Team


Editor: Ana M.T. P. Labrador, Ph.D.
Assistant Editor: Erika C. Robis
Texts and extended labels: Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi
Text contributions: Caroline Marie D. Duque, Ceres Marie P. Canilao,
Mariah Camille T. Calanno and Danelyn S. Sumaylo
Layout and design: Erika C. Robis


National Museum of Fine Arts



Open Tuesdays to Sundays, 10 AM to 5 PM

 Padre Burgos Avenue, Ermita 1000 City of Manila

 www.nationalmuseum.gov.ph

 nationalmuseumph@yahoo.com

 [nationalmuseumofthephilippines](https://www.facebook.com/nationalmuseumofthephilippines)

 [@nationalmuseumph](https://www.instagram.com/nationalmuseumph)  [@natmuseumph](https://twitter.com/natmuseumph)