

MEDIA RELEASE

ON THE EXHIBITION

“THE LONGEST JOURNEY: THE FIRST JOURNEY AROUND THE WORLD”

**A COLLABORATION OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PHILIPPINES
AND THE EMBASSY OF SPAIN IN THE PHILIPPINES ON THE OCCASION OF
THE QUINCENTENNIAL OF THE FIRST CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF THE WORLD**

**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
(GALLERIES XXV AND XXVI)**

**FORMAL EXHIBITION OPENING: MARCH 23, 2022
PUBLIC VIEWING: MARCH 24, 2022 ONWARDS**

“In those days, in Valladolid, there came a sailor fleeing from Portugal... called Ferdinand Magellan...” Thus did Bartolome de las Casas recount events in 1518 at the Spanish court that led to one of the greatest achievements in human history, the first circumnavigation of the planet Earth, which was achieved over a thousand days from September 20, 1519 to September 8, 1522.

With that sense of human drama and adventure awaiting an eager viewer, the National Museum of the Philippines, in collaboration with the Embassy of Spain in the Philippines, presents *The Longest Journey: The First Journey Around the World*. The exhibition opens to the public on the 4th floor galleries of the National Museum of Fine Arts from Thursday, March 24, 2022.

First launched in 2019, the original and unabridged exhibition was on view at the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, Spain, the world’s most important archives of documents on the ages of discovery, conquest and colonial administration across the whole Spanish Empire, including the Philippines. Commemorating the quincentennial of this circumnavigation, the exhibition was curated by a team headed by Antonio Fernández Torres, and organized by Acción Cultural Española and Spain’s Ministry of Culture and Sports. It highlighted the entire route of the voyage, described as “not only the greatest maritime adventure of all time, but a major milestone in the history of discoveries”, through a display of objects and artifacts, along with priceless documents preserved at the Archivo General de Indias and other important archives, libraries and museums. A comprehensive exhibition catalogue in Spanish, featuring scholarly essays and references, may be accessed and downloaded for free at <https://www.accioncultural.es/es/el-viaje-mas-largo-ebook>.

Over the last two years, a travelling version of *The Longest Journey* has been featured in many places around the world. The National Museum of the Philippines is very proud to create its adaptation and had the distinct privilege of inviting the Ambassador of Spain, Jorge Moragas Sanchez, to contribute directly to it as a special guest curator. This collaboration builds on a very productive partnership that has existed for many years, and which has facilitated the presentation of many exhibitions at the National Museum of the Philippines that have in the past decade included *Pacifico: Spain and the Adventure of the South Sea* (2013-2014) and *Flavors that Sail Across the Seas* (2016-2017).

This abridged exhibition presents the circumnavigation in 14 sections, together with high-quality facsimiles of some original archival documents, including the contract made between Carlos I and Ferdinand Magellan. The centerpiece of the main gallery is a model of the *Victoria*, the only ship out of the inaugural five to return back to Spain. Four screens also display audio-visual presentations from the original exhibition.

The National Museum of the Philippines and the Embassy of Spain in the Philippines worked with the Spanish curatorial team to present details that will not be found in any other version of *The Longest Journey*, in Spain or worldwide. These include a number of special archaeological, ethnographic and devotional art objects and natural history specimens of flora and fauna chosen from the collections of the National Museum and the Intramuros Administration to evoke the sense of discovery and encounter that must have been experienced by Magellan and his crew upon their arrival and through their time in the archipelago, as well as the legacy of their voyage for Filipinos later and today.

Intrinsic to the Philippine part of the first circumnavigation of the globe are the major events that continue to exist in the popular memory of Filipinos – the blood compacts, the first masses, the erection of crosses, the first Christian conversions and baptisms, the presentation of the Santo Niño, the Battle of Mactan and the death of Magellan, together with lesser-known events that have been very well highlighted by the research, programs, projects and myriad activities of the National Quincentennial Commission and the National Historical Commission of the Philippines.

In addition to *The Longest Journey*, the National Museum of the Philippines is also featuring, in its commemoration of the Philippine part of the first circumnavigation of the world:

- In the hallway gallery immediately outside the exhibition of *The Longest Journey*, unique works of art, specifically:
 - A pair of fine mid-19th century portraits in oil of Ferdinand Magellan and Sebastian Elcano that were commissioned in 1856 from Manila by Margarita Roxas de Ayala and painted by an unknown artist in Madrid. These were later donated to the National Library of the Philippines in 1914 by Trinidad Roxas de Ayala and installed at Malacañan Palace in 1938 by President Manuel L. Quezon. On loan courtesy of the Office of the President through the Malacañang Museum.
 - The historical painting *Ang Wakas ni Magallanes* (The Death of Magellan) by National Artist Fernando Amorsolo, dated 1963, commissioned from the artist by Guillermo B. Guevera. On loan courtesy of the Judge Guillermo B. Guevara Foundation.
 - Seven episodes of Spanish-Filipino encounters reimagined by artist Roderick Macutay and drawn in pen and ink, commissioned in 2020 by the National Quincentennial Committee.

These works are part of a larger series of drawings that have been translated into sculptural reliefs for the official quincentennial markers installed by the NQC at major points along the route of the circumnavigation throughout the country and unveiled throughout 2021. On loan courtesy of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines.

- The *Battle of Mactan* by Elmer Borlongan, a large-format and major work of the artist especially produced for the occasion, together with the companion documentary *Battle Stars* produced by Plet Bolipata, all in partnership with the arts advocacy group CANVAS headed by Gigo Alampay. The painting and the documentary can be seen in the Spoliarium Hall and Sergio Osmeña Hall, respectively of the National Museum of Fine Arts.
- An exhibition of 12 paintings in the four categories of Sovereignty, Magnanimity, Unity and Legacy, representing the grand prize winners and minor prize winners of the National Quincentennial Art Competition, in collaboration with the National Quincentennial Committee and the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, which can be found at the side galleries of the Old Senate Session Hall of the National Museum of Fine Arts.

The National Museum of the Philippines, with the Embassy of Spain in the Philippines, expresses appreciation and gratitude to their media friends and partners for their interest and strong support.

For more information, please contact Ms. Rochelle Van C. Reyes, Communication and External Affairs Officer, National Museum of the Philippines, at rochelle.reyes@nationalmuseum.gov.ph or 0927-5676724.

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