

KIDLAT TAHIMIK



Kidlat Tahimik, born Eric Oteyza de Guia, is an independent filmmaker who primarily advocates for indigenous culture amidst neocolonialism. He has been dubbed the “Father of Philippine Indie Cinema” and was conferred the prestigious Order of National Artist in the field of film and broadcast arts in 2018.

Tracing his roots from Baguio City, Eric attempted to live the usual life of stability and pursued a master’s degree in Business Administration at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Dissatisfied, he returned to his home region and opened his eyes to the challenges faced by the Igorot community, which has struggled for cultural autonomy in the face of continued colonial influence in modern times. And so, he began telling local stories from the local point of view, making films that would reflect the beauty and realities of Filipino culture while critiquing what he calls a “neocolonial state” of people’s everyday lives.



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His debut film, *Mababangong Bangungot* (Perfumed Nightmares), revolved around a Filipino jeepney driver, named Kidlat Tahimik (“silent lightning”), who aspires of becoming an astronaut and succeeding in the United States, only to find out that the Western culture is far from ideal. This story of disillusionment is condensed by the character’s name as his journey to tapping into his culture gave him the strength to wake up the “sleeping typhoon”, the true power of the indigenous culture. He considered this film the death of “Eric Oteyza de Guia” and the birth of “Kidlat Tahimik”.

Films

- *Mababangong Bangungot/Perfumed Nightmares* (1977)
- *Who Invented the Yoyo? Who Invented the Moon Buggy?* (1979)
- *Yan Ki Made in Hong Kong* (1980)
- *Turumba* (1981)
- *Memories of Overdevelopment* (1984)
- *Takedera Mon Amour* (1991)
- *Why Is Yellow the Middle of the Rainbow?* (1994)
- *Japanese Summers of a Filipino Fundoshi* (1996)
- *Banal Kahoy* (2002)
- *Video-Palaro: The Video Diaries of Kidlat Tahimik* (2006)
- *Balikbayan #1: Memories of Overdevelopment Redux* (2015)

Kidlat Tahimik is a hands-on artist. He directs, produces, and even acts in his films. He is peculiarly known for his lack of scripts when making films. This is his “kapa-kapa” method where he does not follow any structure, simply going with the flow until he reaches the destination. His signature bamboo camera is symbolic of his recognition of the beauty of indigenous knowledge and his effort in preserving it through storytelling. He emphasizes that this is not “moving backward” but anchoring oneself to authentic Filipino culture.



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Beyond filmmaking, he also designed and built the Ili-Likha Artist Village in Baguio, flaunting Cordillera culture through its in-house cinema, food community, and even flower shop. Similar to his films, Kidlat did not follow any architectural plans and designs. He also wanted to ensure that all structures respected nature, going around the existing trees and using materials that are only “provided” by nature, not taken from it.

His latest exhibition “INDIO-GENIUS: 500 Taon ng Labanang Kultural (1521-2021)” only proves that, even at 80, his will to champion the indigenous people is never shattered – an indestructible force leading the Filipino to find the “Indio-Genius” in them.