

Jaime de Guzman

Jaime Arevalo de Guzman, born on March 4, 1942, was among the inaugural recipients of the Thirteen Artists Award in 1970. He hailed from Liliw, Laguna. Initially, Jaime pursued Economics at Ateneo de Manila University but shifted his focus to painting in 1963 when he enrolled at the University of Santo Tomas. Two years into his painting program, Jaime embarked on extensive travels, documenting everyday scenes from various regions of the Philippines, including the bustling port of Cebu, the interiors of local artists' homes, the hills of Samar, and the streets of Zamboanga. In 1967, Jaime's career gained momentum as he held his first solo exhibition at La Solidaridad Gallery. Concurrently, he participated in the Art Association of the Philippines' Sixteen Young Artists group exhibition. That same year, he presented his paintings and drawings in a solo exhibition at the National Museum in Manila, and over the following year, his works were featured in various group shows at the Luz Gallery, where he continued to display works until 1970.

The year 1970 marked a pivotal phase in Jaime's career. He unveiled "Drawings by Jaime de Guzman" during the inauguration of the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Small Gallery, under the curation of Roberto Chabet. During this period, he also designed the stage for Alice Reyes' ballet performance, "Itim Asu," at the CCP Little Theater. Jaime was also granted the opportunity to travel to Mexico, where he gleaned insights from the revered muralist David Siqueiros.

At the inaugural Thirteen Artists exhibition at CCP, Jaime introduced "Metamorphosis," a series of three murals in oil on canvas, and presented by Chabet as centerpieces. Jaime's distorted figurations within apocalyptic landscapes were infused with personal mythology. Through his Metamorphosis I - III series exuded an undeniable anxiety, interweaving cultural symbols, figurative and abstract styles, and a deeply personalized mythology with narratives that grappled the social, historical, and psychological dimensions. This symbolist thread ran consistently throughout his series, as he visualized inner parapsychic forces as archetypal creatures reconfiguring the world, conveying a singular disclosure away from the artistic norms of his time.

In the subsequent years, Jaime and his partner, American potter Anne Polkinghorn, established their residence in Sagada, and later relocated to Candelaria, Quezon, building a family. In 1984, Jaime was part of the inaugural exhibition at Pinaglabanan Gallery. During the same year, he showcased his artworks in the group exhibition titled "Mt. Banahaw" at Hiraya Gallery, depicting the mystical landscapes, creatures, and people of the sacred mountain. He continued to display his pottery and paintings both locally in Baguio and Sagada and internationally in Thailand, Cambodia, and Indonesia.

In 2015, the Cultural Center of the Philippines paid tribute to Jaime's decades of artistic output with a retrospective exhibition titled "Revelations." Throughout his life and work in Candelaria, Jaime's exploration of mythological scapes in his paintings persisted, albeit with a more subdued palette and finer brushwork—a testament to the artist's spiritual growth and its translations to his works. He continued to create paintings and ceramics until his passing on February 25, 2023, leaving an enduring legacy that has significantly impacted the tropology of social realism and expressionism in Philippine art.

References

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