Carlos Arguelles. Philam Life Building, Manila, Philippines, 1961.

Rising from of the Ashes: Post-war Philippines Architecture

BY GERARD LICO

The 1945 battle for liberation witnessed the massive decimation of Manila's urban built-heritage and the irreplaceable treasures of colonial architecture. Despite the seemingly impossible task to resuscitate war-ravaged Manila, it rose again. Out of the ashes, modernism provided the opportunity to craft a new architecture for a newly independent nation. Modernism emerged as the period's architectural symbol of survival and optimism. In a post-colonial cultural milieu, Filipino architects pursued the iconography of national mythology channeled through the pure surfaces and unadorned geometries of modern architecture. They found in modernism a convenient aesthetic modus to denounce the colonial vestiges embodied in the infrastructure of American neoclassicism in pre-war Manila and sought to create new-built environments that conveyed emancipation from the colonial past and celebrate the vernacular forms processed through modernist geometric simplification. Modernism, therefore, was a logical choice, for it provided a progressive image. The Philippines post-independence architecture endeavored to dispense an image that stimulated a national spirit, inspired patriotism, and invoked faith in the unknown future of the national imagination.

At the end of the Pacific War in 1945, Manila lay in ruin. The city's built-heritage and once grand edifices of Spanish and American colonial architecture were reduced to rubble by indiscriminate bombardment to liberate the city. American bombs turned Manila into the second most devastated Allied city in the world. Yet war-torn Manila rose again. Out of the ashes, Filipinos moved on to rebuild their lives and would be gripped by nostalgia for nation, a sense of mourning for the things lost during the war, but they found in modernism the foundation on which to erect a new nation.

The widespread dissemination of modernism in the Philippines happened after the Pacific War and coincided with post-war reconstruction and the birth of the Filipino nation. Despite the shaken state of the country in the aftermath of WWII, on July 4, 1946, the Philippine Islands became the independent Republic of the Philippines. Soon after, the new nation-state found in modern architecture and modernism a way to divorce itself from the vestiges of colonization and to create new-built environments that conveyed freedom from the colonial past. Modernism was found in audacious explorations of new architectural forms in the post-war creative imagination. Modernism possessed a symbolic allure of a new architecture for rebuilding a brave new world ravaged by war. Modern architecture, in the midst of post-war recuperation and the advent of national independence, provided the appropriate architectural image that represented growth, progress, advancement and decolonization.

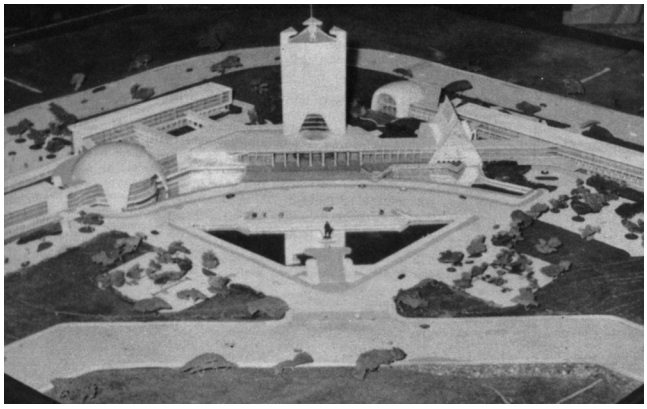
Though modern architecture had a reputation of being arid, machine-like, and impersonal, it was considered by many as positive, rational and objective, and they championed its ability to express a new social order. The modern fervour fuelled the building of a new Capitol Complex. The adaptation of modern architecture as the official architectural style was not arbitrary but a strategic choice for it possessed a symbolic appeal of technological advancement, economic prosperity and cultural progress that an emerging nation would aspire to. Emblematically, modernism conferred materiality to the Filipino national imagination, circulating in the potent visual politics of nation building.

The US War Damage Rehabilitation Fund was also instrumental in resurrecting Manila's pre-war neoclassical splendor. The Manila City Hall (1941), Post Office building (1931), Agriculture and Finance buildings (1940), Legislative building (1926), and a group of buildings of the University of the Philippines (1920-30s) in Manila were rebuilt approximating their original plans.

As the war damage claims reached their respective beneficiaries, a construction boom followed suit. The architects, after a long inactive practice, dusted off their drawing boards and joined the reconstruction euphoria. As they built to address the widespread housing shortage and infrastructure deficit, they had to abandon the motifs and ornament of styles of the pre-war era to reduce the construction cost and efficiently complete the structure in the shortest possible time. Post-war austerity meant straightforward and no-nonsense architectural forms which modernism readily supplied. "Form follows function" was the new doctrine proclaimed by the "third generation" Filipino architects, namely, Jose Maria Zaragoza (1912-1994), Cesar Concio (1907-2003), Angel Nakpil (1914-1980), Alfredo Luz (1904-1980), Otillo Arellano (1916-1981), Felipe Mendoza (1917-2000), Gabriel Formoso (1915-1996) and Carlos Arguelles

01 Caesar Concio, University of the Philippines Liberal Arts Building, Quezon City, Philippines, 1950.

02 Federico Ilustre, Model of the proposed National Parliament, Quezon City, Philippines, 1957.



(1917-2008). For them, modernism was the most appropriate architecture for crafting an environment and recuperating lives after the devastation and trauma of war.

Modern architecture's simplified geometries were in accordance with demands for honesty expressed in materials, structure and form; maneuver in restraint rather than indulgence, valuing simplicity over complexity. To modern architects, buildings should be shaped purely by light, structure, and massing and not be disguised or concealed behind ornamentation. The utilization of reinforced concrete, steel, and glass, the predominance of cubic forms, geometric shapes, Cartesian grids, and most of all the absence of all forms of applied decoration were the essential features of modern architecture. The *brise-soleil* or sun shade, glass walls, pierced screen and thin concrete shells were staple architectural elements of the 1950s and 1960s.

The Philippine government's use of modernism to sustain its patrimony was pursued immediately after it declared its independence. The faith in modernism fuelled the building of a new and modern Capitol Complex. As early as 1947, the Philippine government constituted a group of architects and engineers on a mission to study the modern capitals of the United States and Latin America and on their return, they were to formulate the master plan for the modern capital city and the campus of the state university. The mission acquainted the Filipino delegation with South American modernism, particularly the works of Oscar Niemeyer (1907-2012). The impact of this exposure among the members of the mission was so immense that on their return they would design buildings that closely resembled the refereed modern structures from South America. For one, Cesar Concio, a member of the delegation who later worked as the university architect of the University of the Philippines, borrowed Oscar Niemeyer's massing and sun shades for his twin Liberal Arts Building (1950) (figure 01) and the Engineering Building and his saddle-shaped Church of the Risen Lord (1954) was imitative of Oscar Niemeyer's St. Francis Church (1943) in Pampulha, Brazil.

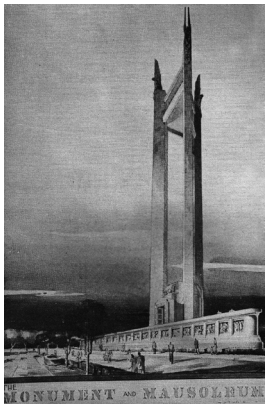
In fulfilment of Philippine Commonwealth President Manuel Quezon's (1878-1944) pre-war urban vision of establishing a new modern metropolis and national capitol for the new commonwealth reminiscent of Washington DC in 1939, the government declared, in 1948, Quezon City as the Philippine capital and created the Capital City Planning Commission to prepare its master plan. In 1949, the commission, chaired by Juan Arellano (1888-1960), submitted the master plan which provided a detailed urban framework for the creation of the capital city. Using the urban scheme of Washington, the plan endorsed a government center situated on a high plateau, called Constitution Hill, composed of imposing edifices: the House of Congress composed of the Senate Wing and the House of Representative Wing linked by a central tower containing the Memorial and the Library of Congress; the Hall of Brotherhood, an assembly hall for important international meetings and conventions; and the Palace of the Chief Executive.

The ambitious capital remained on paper until 1955 when the government finalized its plan to relocate all its offices from Manila to Quezon City. In May 1956, the proposed design and scale model of the Capitol Complex on Constitution Hill were presented to the public. These were prepared by Federico S. Ilustre (1912–1989), the consulting architect of the Bureau of Public Works. Ilustre's Brasilia-inspired design stirred much controversy. Consciously propelled by concepts of national identity, his design combined unrelated shapes and flamboyant forms; used building height for excessive monumental effect; and toyed with Philippine stylistic motifs (figure 02). Despite the outrage and criticism, preliminary construction work commenced in 1958 but was later abandoned as the funds dwindled in 1960. What remained of the project was an 11-story structural steel frame, which was used for the structure of the *Batasang Pambansa* [National Parliament] decades later when President Ferdinand Marcos (1917-1989) revived the plans for the Parliamentary Complex.

This, however, did not stop government architects from dreaming; and moving on to design government edifices in the mold of some tropicalized South American modern architecture production. The Division of Architecture had produced these kinds of structures for the bureaucracy. These were not just modern buildings of efficient governance, but a medium to stimulate nationalistic spirit, inspire

03 Federico Ilustre, Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) Building, Pasay City, Philippines, 1957.

04 Federico Ilustre, Quezon Memorial Monument, Quezon City, Philippines, 1950-1978.



patriotism, and evoke technological progress as well. The pinnacle of this fixation with South American modern production was the unbuilt plan for the 1967 Department of Education Complex which featured elements resonating with Oscar Niemeyer's Brasilia – such as the rectangular block suspended by sculptural stilts, fenestrations of delicate vertical louvers, and the iconic domical thin-shell structure.

The need for new government building was greatly felt in the 1950s as old government edifices could no longer accommodate the state's burgeoning bureaucracy and expanded services. The building program of the new Republic grew beyond the capacity of the Division of Architecture of the Bureau of Public Works to handle, necessitating the revision of its policies in 1952 which allowed private practitioners to engage in government projects. The change in policy resulted in a diversity of architectural expressions and design ideologies to shape modern government edifices.

The Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) Building (figure 03) in Aroceros, Manila, by Federico Ilustre, completed in 1957, belonged to the first batch of the new government buildings programed for the New Republic. As a transitional style for government architecture, the building demonstrated the shift from classical to modern. It had an imposing façade with soaring pillars that were fluted but without bases or capitals that evoked classical proportions but its volumes were highly simplified in a modern manner. The Veterans Memorial Building, completed in the same year, was decidedly modern with its semi-circular convex façade flanked by two massive vertical walls. The curved façade was complemented by a dome structure over the circular vestibule supported by slender *pilotis.* Transparent plastic bubble skylights punctured the dome to provide natural daylight.

The old capitol site in Diliman, Quezon City, in the 1950s played host to several government agencies that boast of hard-edge modern architecture. These were the Motor Vehicles Office, People's Homesite and Housing Corporation, Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the Agricultural Extension Buildings. The centerpiece of this elliptical core is the 66-meter high Art Deco Quezon Memorial Monument (1950-1978) (figure 04), by Federico Ilustre, composed of 3 pylons topped by female winged figures representing 3 major islands of the Philippines – Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

The National Library (1961), designed by a consortium of architects known as Hexagon Architects, was a plain rectangular prism, whose façade was almost wholly covered by grids of vertical slats except at the center where planes of curtain wall rendered transparency to the building. The planes of glass were further defined by towering and slender *pieds droits*, dividing it into 5 vertical sections.

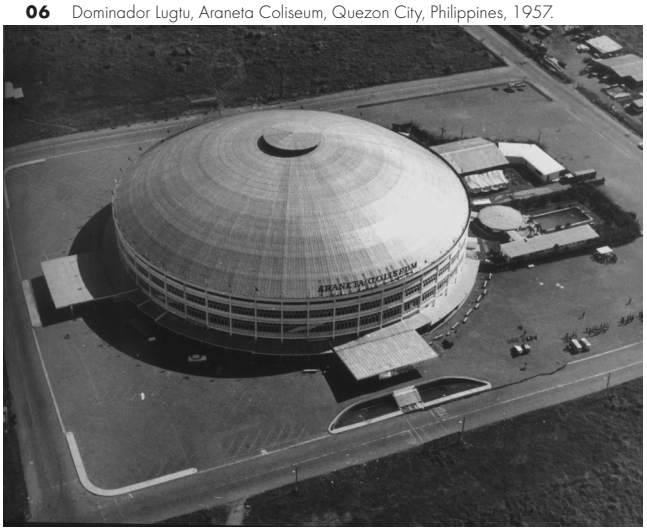
Ruperto Gaite's Rizal Provincial Capitol (1962) was one of the important post-war capitol edifices that deviated from *Beaux Arts* formalism. The modern capitol was remarkable for the diamond-shaped concrete supports extracted from Oscar Niemeyer's Presidential Palace in Brasilia (1960). The Rizal Capitol was replete with wrap-around louvers and sun-baffles. The extensive use of concrete translated into a saw-tooth folded plate roof and abstracted and repetitive façade details. In the Quezon City Assembly Hall, Gaite created an illusion of weightlessness as a massive elongated octagonal structure appeared to be lifted by two tapering stilts.

Juan F. Nakpil (1899-1986) and Sons' Social Security System Building (1965) was formed by a low podium and a 60-meter slab tower clad in a curtain wall. The building could be accessed at the podium level through an open ramp protected by a folded plate canopy. The tall slab tower was serviced by an external spine housing the elevators. Continuous bands of aluminum louvers shielded the façade of the slab block while precast concrete diffusers, placed on East and West sides, were designed to give a strong pattern of light and shadow.

Mid-century modern aesthetics were also influenced by new materials and scientific events, particularly space exploration, which fuelled much faith in technology and the future. Logically, modern architectural design feverishly looked towards the infinity of the skies for inspiration. This so-called "space age" of the 1950s had since been translated into a visual language of long, lean horizontal lines suggesting airplane wings, soaring upright structures and parabolic arches that direct the eye to the sky, and sharply contrasted angles that express speed.

05 Leandro Locsin, Church of the Holy Sacrifice, Quezon City, Philippines, 1955.

06 Dominador Lugtu, Araneta Coliseum, Quezon City, Philippines, 1957.



Innovations in building materials, including reinforced concrete, plastics, and steel, made it possible for architects to manipulate materials to the point where buildings became sculptures. Complex mathematical computations and advanced engineering techniques allowed new shapes and structural configurations to be performed in thin concrete shells, concrete folded plates and space frames structures. Soft modernism, as the name implied, experimented with the sculptural potential of concrete's plasticity to come up with soft and organic forms with the use of thin-shell technology. The typical geometrical forms generated by thin shell engineering were the hyperbolic paraboloid (Church of the Risen Lord) and spherical dome (Church of the Holy Sacrifice).

In the Philippines, the first venture into thin-shell experimentation yielded the Church of the Holy Sacrifice (1955) (figure 05).

This was a revolutionary structure heralded by national artist Leandro Locsin (1928-1994) and engineers Alfredo Junio and David Consunji. Amazingly, the structure was molded in its entirety using mere plywood forms and a continuous 18-hour process of concrete pouring. The main concrete shell was 3½ inches (30 mm) thick and was supported by a 4-inch (100 mm) thick ring beam that in turn was supported by 32 curved reinforced columns. The composition seemed to defy gravity with its visually buoyant spherical dome and imagery reminiscent of a flying saucer.

The facility of the Philippine Atomic Research Center (1963), designed by Cresenciano de Castro (1927-1992, comprised an arc-shaped nuclear laboratory building and an egg-shaped reactor building. The reactor building was an air-tight concrete shell structure. East of the reactor building and connected by entrance tunnel was a semi-circular administration and auxiliary laboratory roofed by a serrated folded plate structure.

The *Araneta* Coliseum (1957) by Dominador Lugtu (figure 06) reigned until 1963 as the world's largest domed coliseum. It was constructed of a reinforced concrete cylinder with an aluminum dome structure. The base of the coliseum and its tiers were cast concrete. The dome was made of steel with 48 main ribs meeting in a compression ring that floated high above the floor. The dome was suspended 10 stories above the arena floor, which itself was a half-acre (0.2 ha) in area.

Folded plate was a roof structure whose strength and stiffness was derived from a pleated or folded geometry. It was a special class of shell structure formed by joining flat, thin slabs along their edges so as to create a three-dimensional structure.

The University of the Philippines International Center (1968), designed by Victor Tiotuyco and Cesar Caliwara, was renowned for its lobby building, built with a large-span folded plate, which rests on four radiating beams rising at acute angle from a triangular ornamental pool.

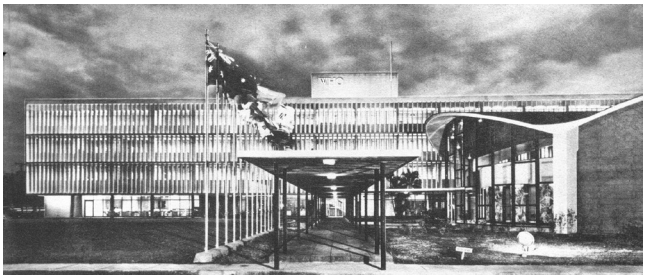
National artist Juan Nakpil introduced the use of folded plate as a structural shell in the 1960s. The profusion of folded plate as a structural plate spurred the utilization of diamond shaped supports on the exterior. Examples of this new style were the now-demolished Rizal Theater (1960), Rufino Building (1965), and the Commercial Bank and Trust Building (1960). Rizal Theater, a building revived from his still-born National Theater project in Luneta, was distinguished by its slightly convex façade with 14 pilasters tapering downwards and a cantilevered canopy. The windows were deliberately made dark to give an illusion of lightness, making the façade seeming to be afloat.

Space age aesthetics also made their presence felt in Jose Maria Zaragoza's cantilevered circular folded plate roof that resembled an *anahaw* [*palma brava*] leaf for the Union Church; in Leandro Locsin's biomorphic billowing roofs for the Church of St. Andrews (1968); in Marcos de Guzman's saucer-shaped residence of Artemio Reyes (1959); and in the Mañosa Brothers' futurist residence of Ignacio Arroyo (1960s).

The use of crystalline surfaces for modern edifices was best captured in Angel Nakpil's National Press Club Building (1955), in which a cylindrical glass tower became the focus of this Bauhaus volumetric manipulation.

The modern places of worship explored new and dynamic forms mostly in concrete. The *Aglipayan* Cathedral of the Holy Child (1969) possessed a suspended block with sloping trapezoidal walls and textured with horizontal grooves

07 Alfredo Luz, World Health Organization Building, Manila, Philippines, 1958.



08 Jose Maria Zaragoza, Meralco Building, Quezon City, Philippines, 1968.

throughout. The sides of the suspended block sloped beyond the walls of the lower block to form wide overhangs.

The omnipresent *kapilyas* [chapels] of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* (INC) were mid-20th century interpretations of Gothic architecture, where pointed arches, the triangular arch, towers and spires, and wall tracery were rendered in austere concrete. The genesis of this *Iglesia ni Cristo* archetype could be traced to the congregation's first concrete neogothic chapel. Its architect, Rufino Antonio, created a castle-like building layered with precast tracery and rosette ornaments, lofty spires and lancet arched windows. Today's iconic *kapilyas* is based on the template crafted by Carlos-Santos Viola (1912-1994) in the 1950s. This template is characterized by a predominance of triangular or Tudor arches, flanked by tall and slender towers which taper and terminate to a sharp spire. Decorative motifs such as rosettes and interlocking trapezoids provide textural appeal to the smooth and crisp external planes.

The expansive use of glass for curtain walls posed a problem of heat build-up. Sun baffles and pierced screens were simple external devices employed to tropicalize and modulate the climate-insensitive glass volumes and rectilinear planes of the International Style.

The Engineering and Architecture Building of the University of Santo Tomas (1952), designed by Julio Victor Rocha, initiated the successful use of the *brise-soleil.* This launched a wave of imitation and a craze for the sun shade, which some architects use indiscriminately without knowledge of proper solar orientation, making the devise a useless and expensive fashion appliqué. But the more judicious application of these sun shading devices resulted in magnificent structures such as Alfredo Luz's World Health Organization Building (1958) (figure 07) and his *Ermita* Center (1967); Cesar Concio's Insular Life Building (1963) (figure 10); and Pablo Antonio's (1901-1975) May Building (1959).

The use of the sun shades remains unsurpassed in the 7-story *Philam* Life Building (essay cover), designed by Carlos Arguelles in 1961. Arguelles utilized wrap-around horizontal aluminum sun baffles supported by pipes and mullions. This horizontal definition negates the bulk and height of the building, allowing it to blend with the surroundings.

Jose Maria Zaragoza's 14-storey *Meralco* Building (1968) (figure 08) was articulated by the series of tapering mullions. The vertical sun shade with a slight curvature was conceived not only for decorative purposes but also for the deflection of light and sound. The ends of the building were emphasized by two massive marble-surfaced walls splayed at an angle.

As a sort of improvement over the *brise-soleil*, the pierced screen was extensively adopted in Manila during the 1960s. The pierced screen functioned mainly as a diffuser of light and doubled as a decorative layer for the exterior. It is fabricated from perforated concrete or ceramic blocks, pre-cast concrete, or aluminum bars with various ornamental punctures. The US Embassy Building, designed by American architect Alfred L. Aydelott (1916-2008), was one of the most noteworthy applications of the pierced screen in Manila. A cubist carabao head motif was employed in the concrete pierced screen of the Department of Agriculture Building in support of nativist impulse.

Following the oil crisis of 1973, architects began to realize the failures of these modern buildings in the tropical climate. The International Style was typified by the cubic glass tower that relied heavily on the technology of artificial ventilation and air-conditioning to provide comfortable internal conditions. These sleek crystalline towers operated on high energy consumption. As such, Filipino architects were compelled to backtrack and re-evaluate vernacular building traditions as sources of energy efficient design, which in effect gave rise to a modernist strand known as tropical regionalism.

Exponents of tropical regionalist architecture advocated the philosophy of energy efficient buildings by pleading for designs that were responsive to both local climate and culture. The products of such undertakings were the Mañosa Brothers' San Miguel Corporation Headquarters Building (1982) (figure 09), Felipe Mendoza's Development Academy of the Philippines (1982), Leandro Locsin's Benguet Corpo-

09 Mañosa Brothers, San Miguel Corporation Headquarters Building, Pasig, Philippines, 1982.

10 Cesar Concio, Insular Life Building, Makati, Philippines, 1963.

ration Building (1983), and Antonio Sindiong's Ritz Towers (1995). The San Miguel Corporation Headquarters Building is a terraced prism that alludes to the verdant rice terraces. The deep and angled glass walls quote the vernacular passive cooling technology of *tukod* windows. Similarly, the Benguet Corporation Building evokes the rugged grandeur of stone-walled rice terraces of the Cordilleras. The design concepts for the GSIS Building, which aimed to reduce the energy consumption by half, called for scientific deductions for the spacing and angles of the *brise-soleil* components and terraced building envelope. The Asian Development Bank Building (1986) is an outstanding example of tropical architecture using built-in structural climatic control devices – such as aluminum grillage, louvers, perforated barriers, and deeply recessed windows.

In the 1950s the height of buildings was limited by law to 30 meters. With the amendment of Manila Ordinance no. 4131, a high-rise fever swept and redefined Manila's skyline. Angel Nakpil's *Picache* Building (1962), considered as the first skyscraper in the Philippines, reached 12-stories high. Cesar Concio's Insular Life Building (figure 10) was the first office building to surpass the old 30-meter height restriction, ushering the vertical trend in the city of Makati.

The marble-surfaced rectangular tower block of the Ramon Magsaysay Center (1967), designed by Alfredo Luz, was supported by 12 travertine-clad reinforced concrete columns like tree trunks flaring out. In reality, the main support was a cast-in-place concrete sheer wall core over deeply embedded concrete piles.

Cresenciano De Castro introduced the use of an exposed aggregate finish. This eliminated the need to paint the exteriors. An excellent example of this brutalist tendency was the Asian Development Bank Building in Roxas Boulevard. The same roughly textured finish was employed in the buildings within the bay front area like the Cultural Center of the Philippine Building (1969) and the Central Bank of the Philippines (1972) with an aggregate mixture of crushed shells derived directly from the site.

To address the widespread homelessness, subdivision development came into full-scale. These planned satellite communities were patterned after American suburbia, which encouraged an automobile culture. New roads and a transportation system were created to efficiently link these suburban communities to the urban core.

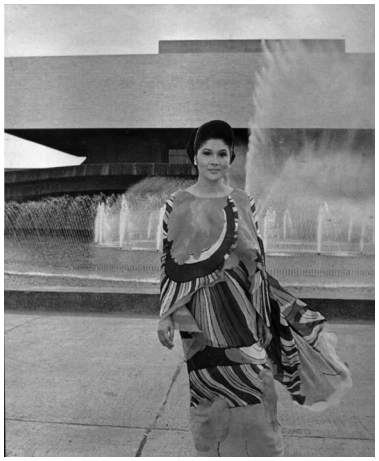
Through the People's Homesite and Housing Corporation (1949) (present-day National Housing Authority), new suburban communities were developed in Quezon City. These projects offered three types of low-cost concrete bungalows: the 3-story row type dwelling, the single-detached type house, and the twin or duplex type. The bungalow thus became the convenient model for post-war housing.

For middle income households, residential units in Philamlife Homes (1955), one of the best-planned subdivisions at the time, were designed on a modular system with 24 schemes for a bungalow derived from a single typical floor plan designed by Argüelles.

In upscale subdivisions established by the real estate companies of Ayala and Ortigas, homes were designed, not by the company architect, but by an architect commissioned by the individual homeowner. This allowed a great variety of domestic architecture to develop – bungalow, split-level, and one-and-a-half story houses. The sprawling Californian bungalow with the lanai and a two-car garage became the 1950s symbol of domestic affluence. These houses incorporated the most up-to-date features such as a single pitch roof, split level roofs and floors, slabs, wall screens, pierced screens, wide overhangs and, most of all, the car porch to accommodate the machine for suburban mobility.

Tall and multi-storied apartments played a new role in providing Filipinos with modern housing. Monterrey Apartments (1957) and Carmen Apartments (1958) epitomized the modern high-rise apartments of the period. Carlos Arguelles' Carmen Apartments was unique for its curved plan which posed an elegant contrast to the surrounding structures in the vicinity. All the floors and units had wide cantilevered balconies. Steel railings and large windows combined with these floating slabs to endow the building with lightness and transparency counteracting the bulk of the reinforced concrete core. Leandro Locsin's Monterrey Apartments was a structure of extreme transparency. Strips

11 Imelda Marcos at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines, 1978.



12 Francisco Mañosa, Coconut Palace, Manila, Philippines, 1980.

of glazing were wrapped around the building while one wall of the central stairwell was encased wholly in glass. Front balconies were treated with aluminum louvered eaves while the rear balconies were provided with louvered railings. Continuous floor slabs or balconies appeared suspended in space.

The global proliferation of the International Style resulted in serial monotony of the nondescript modernist box, obliterating many traditional built environments. By the middle of the 1960s, young architects and designers began to reappraise the country's rich architectural and cultural heritage as a source of design inspiration. The need to express a local identity in built-forms suddenly became the preoccupation of many in the practice of architecture in the mid-1960s.

Local architects adapted Maranaw and Southern Philippine motifs, exploiting *vinta* colors and roof silhouettes resonating ambiguous Malayan figuration. These were transcribed in works like Mañosa Brothers' *Sulo* Hotel (1962) and Francisco Fajardo's Max's Restaurant (1960) and *Luau* Restaurant (1960) which exaggerated the vernacular sloping roofs. Mañosa Brothers' Esso Gas Stations (1962) transcoded the *naga* pattern in reinforced concrete. Felipe Mendoza's Holiday Hill's Golf Club House (1963) liberally applied the *naga*'s head in ornately carved beam ends. Otillo Arellano's FILOIL Service Stations employed the *Maranao Panolong* [ornate beam ends] as decorative accents.

Gabriel Formoso's Valley Golf Club (1960), when seen from a bird's eye view, assumed a floor plan suggesting the form of a golf ball resting on a tee. Although with such literal frankness, the structure at street level evoked the grace of the vernacular sloping roof.

This vernacular tendency extended beyond Philippine shores as manifested by a number of Philippine embassies designed by Federico Ilustre in the 1960s. These embassies were grafted with traditional rooflines such as those in India, Jeddah, and Brazil.

In a similar fashion, designs for Philippine pavilions for various international expositions appropriated exotic building motifs for the projection of a national image in the international arena, which began when Manila hosted the Philippine International Fair in 1953. In the 1958 Brussels Universal Exposition, the country was represented through a pavilion no different to the *bahay kubo*, the Philippine vernacular house, except that its high-pitched roof was transparent plastic and its walls were simulated *sawali* [woven bamboo mats] sidings. For the 1962 Seattle World Exposition, the Philippine pavilion took on a less literal interpretation of vernacular architecture via the cuboidal pavilion designed by Luis Araneta (1916-1984). Yet the surface ornaments that lavished this simple cube were no doubt exotic.

The Philippine pavilion for the 1964 New York World's Fair designed by Otillo Arellano, demonstrated the interaction of native design and spatial age aesthetics. The roof assumed the form of a wide-brimmed *salakot* lifted above the ground by stilts which looked like a levitating space craft. In the 1970 World Exposition in Osaka, Japan, Leandro Locsin created a national pavilion with an exaggeratedly protruding form which could be variously interpreted as a bird in flight, a prow of a Muslim *vinta* [boat] or as a metaphor for the nation's progressive aspirations.

The dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos held the promise of national rebirth and resurrection of old Filipino traditions. The cultural and architectural agenda of the regime, which spanned from 1965 to 1986, was placed under the auspices of the First Lady Imelda Marcos (1929-), who packaged herself as "The Patroness of the Arts" and tended the cultural renaissance of the nation. A singular "national architectural style" braced by the motto *Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa* [One Nation, One Soul] was invented using indigenous architectural icons as design trajectories. The regime's extravagant building program was legitimized by the search for national identity and nation-building. The colossal building projects of the Marcoses – cultural buildings, finance complexes, medical centers, mass housing, hotels, convention centers, sports complexes, airports, official residences, and a Filipino theme park – projected an image of a progressive and modern nation-state. Behind the façade of seemingly infallible modernity lurked the squalor of informal settlements and rampant poverty.

The infrastructure projects of the regime, unprecedented in Philippine history since the post-WWII reconstruction period, projected an image of a progressive and modern nation-state. Interestingly, it was in this repressive political climate that a golden age of Philippine architecture flourished, catalysed by the iconic works of the modernist mandarin Leandro Locsin, and neovernacular pioneer Francisco Mañosa (1931-). The regime's manipulation of space sought to prescribe a reincarnation [*palingenesis*] of vernacular civilization, crafted from a synthesis of indigenous and cosmopolitan aspirations of modernity: identity as a derivative of primeval ancestry, and identity as evidence of human progress, made possible through art. Thus, the modernizing impulses relied on some contradictory, anti-modern features such as the cult of the leader, the justification of force and violence, the invocation of the past, and the notion of *Bagong Lipunan* as the revivified epitome of Malayan culture. The myth conveyed by the regime's architecture is a consolidation of a unitary image of the Filipino in architecture, circulated by the regime in order to illuminate the promise of "national architecture" or the architecture for the nation.

The regime promoted traditional culture and refashioned ethnic symbols in every imaginable form. These archaic symbols were co-opted to substantiate the nationalist fantasies of the Marcos regime, which was inclined to impose an invented Filipino identity. The essential characteristics of the *bahay kubo* – its visual lightness, honesty and simplicity of materials, exterior-interior continuum, and non-compartmentalized arrangement of interior spaces which flow organically — are reinterpreted by means of crisp modernist vocabulary in the manipulation of primary Cartesian rectangular masses and spatial drama in the cantilever projections in Leandro Locsin's buildings at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Complex (1969-1981) (figure 13).

The CCP Main Theater, Folk Arts Theater, Philippine International Convention Center, and the Philippine Center for International Trade and Exhibitions demonstrate Leandro Locsin's application of abstract cubist principles to distil the essential and floating qualities of the *bahay kubo* into sculptural edifices.

A more profound allusion to the *bahay kubo* and a slight deviation from the modernist box is Leandro Locsin's design for the National Arts Center. Acquiring outright inspiration from early Philippine edifices, the building was dominated by a huge truncated pyramidal tiled roof supported at four corners by eight triangular buttresses. The pyramidal superstructure evoked the rooflines of Austronesian stilt dwellings. Such imagery was later rehashed for other state buildings like the Felipe Mendoza´s *Batasang Pambansa* (1978) and *Baguio* Convention Center (1978).

The regime's mass housing program used the vernacular paradigm to develop its prototype houses like those found in *Bangong Lipunan* Infrastructure Sites and Services (BLISS) (1979) housing, Kapitbahayan (1976) and Maharlika Villages (1974). In 1981, Geronimo Manahan, collaborating with the Ministry of Energy, developed a prototype house known as the Passively Cooled Urban House through the marriage of scientific methods and vernacular building technology in support of energy conservation.

Taking the same romantic nationalist strategy, Francisco Mañosa used an imitative and straightforward approach for his *Tahanang* Filipino or Coconut Palace (1980) (figure 12). This palatial residence showcased a double roof reminiscent of the native farmer's wide-brimmed hat [*salakot*] and a swing-out [*tukod*-style] window borrowed from the *bahay kubo*. Every inch of the building harked back to an idealized past using primarily coconut and its by-product. Here, Francisco Mañosa's hexagonal design plans were taken from the hexagonal cross-sectional pattern of lumberyard-cut coconut trunk. Through this watershed building, Francisco Mañosa began to more firmly align his practice towards the advocacy of climate-responsive vernacular architecture – such as the Ateneo Professional Schools (1991), Ateneo Educational Building (1996), Pearl Farm Resort (1989), Lanao Provincial Capitol (1998), Mary Immaculate Parish Church (1988), Aquino Center (2001), Bamboo Mansion (1981) and his own residence (1983) – a body of work which made him the paternal figure of Filipino neovernacular.

Modernism in the Philippines was beginning to lose its ground by the 1980s and many came to denounce the austere modernist buildings as boring and lacking character. The canons of modern architecture were challenged by a movement which sought to rummage through historicist precedent to celebrate pluralistic architectures. Postmodern architecture altered the landscape with buildings proclaiming the resurgence of ornament as an antidote for modernism's renunciation of history and tradition. This was a reaction against a building style now found to be boring, indifferent to its surroundings, and devoid of historical and cultural associations. Moreover, the full-scale condemnation of modernism reached its peak after the EDSA revolution of 1986, when the modern and monumental architecture of the conjugal dictatorship of the Marcoses were perceived by Filipinos as symbols of excess, repression and authoritarian power – symptomatic of the regime's "edifice complex". In the liberal atmosphere of post-EDSA, postmodernism all-pervasive style would soon engulf the architectural landscape, serving as an antidote for modernism's renunciation of history and tradition and to regain freedom from the panoptic Marcosian modernity. This new period held a promise of liberation from the stern modernist paradigm and sanctioned an "anything-goes" exuberance to craft pluralistic architectural expressions.

The cult of postmodernism threatens the survival of the modernist building. In the last two decades, many of the modern landmarks have been subjected to the wrecking ball to make way for new developments in the central business districts of Makati and Manila. In the residential areas of Manila, Cebu and Quezon City, many sprawling mid-century residences succumbed to the pressures of real estate developments and have been turned into anonymous, high-density, and nondescript condominiums. In 2009, the rampant destruction and replacement of modern built heritage was brought to a halt with the promulgation of the Republic Act (RA) No. 10066, otherwise known as the

13 Leandro Locsin, Cultural Center of the Philippines Complex, Manila, Philippines, 1969-1981.

National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, which has instituted protection for two types of built heritage, among the innumerable cultural properties in this country.

First, the said law accords absolute protection to built heritage that has been declared as nationally significant. As these properties are integral to the articulation of the national identity, the State has the constitutional duty to preserve and enrich, and the power to regulate their disposition. For this purpose, the Philippines Congress has assigned to the national cultural agencies (CA) the authority and ability to identify which built structures possess national significance and to categorize them under specific nomenclature. The National Museum (NM) categorizes National Cultural Treasures and Important Cultural Properties, whilst the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) declares National Historical Landmarks, Shrines, and Monuments, as well as Historic Sites and Heritage Houses. The NM and NHCP are both required to search, research, maintain, and update substantial bodies of documentation on each cultural property prior to declaration, in order to clearly establish or support their statements of significance. As RA 10066 highlights the primordial importance of significance and its maintenance over time, the same law has empowered the CAs to administer these above-titled properties, monitor their states of conservation, approve methods and materials of conservation that are applicable to the same, and exercise powers to command the stoppage of works endangering the physical integrity of these structures and to compel their maintenance or repair. The same powers are also exercised by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) over the Philippine World Heritage Sites declared by UNESCO.

Second, the same law empowers the national cultural agencies to enrich the pool of national cultural properties. Contingent to this, the CAs continue to assess built heritage everywhere and have the power to protect structures of at least 50 years old from demolition or modification until the same have been deemed as either nationally or locally significant. This function necessitates formidable documentation as decisions of the CAs pertain to their quasi-judicial authority, which are contestable only in the proper courts.

Since the passage of the implementing rules and regulations of RA 10066 in 2012, the NCCA, NM, and NHCP have been dealing with all sorts of heritage cases involving cultural properties of either national or local significance. This piece of legislation ensured the protection and perpetuation of modernist built legacy in the Philippines for generations to come.

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