

Feminism, outlet for
female artists to
express their



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Feminism, as defined by Merriam-Webster, it is the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes, and also organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interest. Feminism is obviously prevalent in the 21st century, and its active population is growing in numbers.

The reason behind this is no other than the integration of technology and innovation on the field of communication; people are more connected and social as ever due to the wonders of Internet, mainly the social medias and networking sites, and feminists are no exception to this. These feminists then go spread awareness using the medium of World Wide Web around the globe, and it was super effective, reshaping media and modern aspects in different forms, and one of these aspects is art. As early as 1960s, this movement called the feminist art movement, women wanted to have equal rights and opportunities as men in the new progressive world. Not only did the corporate world felt this movement, the art world as well for it was an outlet for female artists to express their thoughts and reflect women's lives and experience through different fields of art.

Since contemporary arts were already emerging back from the time of the movement, they were free to do be expressive in open and bold topics, being able to influence a lot of women at the time and even flourished in 1970s, being so called as the second wave of feminism. Even according to Strick, the director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles said that it has been called " the most influential international movement of any during the postwar period". Sometime after, feminist population worldwide, specifically in Asia and Africa, emerged in large numbers due to the contemporary art being popular. This has been the general status of

feminism art movement ever since, it's still present but barely active in art exhibits and the hearts of feminist artists. This was not the case for the Philippine feminist movement; ours was different from other country, there was no need of feminist movement in this country since as early as pre-Spanish era where local communities were led mostly women, and even now, according to Guzman from Quora, the current Filipino population does not any issues in having a female president. Although some people have issues with these female presidents, it's not because of them being a woman. The Philippines also had the highest rank among the Asian countries on the Global Gender Gap Index, implying that Philippines is an egalitarian state, equal rights and opportunities from education to employment. So basically, the idea is that feminism is not that intense here in the Philippines, even though they are still some feminist groups present in the country such as the Gabriela Women's Party, it does not change the fact that feminism is not that strong in the country since men and women were already established of having equal rights and opportunities way back before 1500s.

Since feminism is not that intense in the Philippines, feminist art movement was also minuscule in the country, but female artists in different fields of art surged in numbers together with men, this was the contemporary period of the country where everyone is free to express and reflect thoughts through any media they desire such as in theater, music, literature, visual arts, and more. In the duration of the period, lots of artists contributed to the development of Philippine arts, in which in return, they were recognized by the whole nation, by the people and the government, in which an order, administered by the Cultural Center of the Philippines through the virtue of

President Ferdinand Marcos' Proclamation No. 1001 of April 2, 1972 and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, was inducted called the National Artists of the Philippines. The order has these categories in which an artist can be recognized originally, and these are music, dance, theater, visual arts, literature, film and broadcasting, and architecture. Ever since that its induction, men and women that made significant contributions into the development of Philippine arts, were awarded by the order. The National Artists Award is completely opportunistic into both men and women, as long as one contributes deeply to the country, they will have the chance of being nominated and the probability to be awarded by the order. But speculating deeply into the award, there are some instances or observations where unfairness between men and women were present, mostly men being biased by the award or vice versa, and these instances are condensed into three.

These three speculated instances or observations are: the population of female national artists and some categories in the National Artists award are mostly dominated by men or women; the possibility of presidential bias over men or women or vice versa on the National Artist award; and the cases of Nora Aunor, Vilma Santos, Rodolfo Vera Quizon Sr., and Anita Magsaysay-Ho. These three are the speculations of the issues of the equality of sexes in the National Artist award, the case of feminism in bestowing the National Artists in the Philippines. The goal in this critique paper is to criticize, analyze, and evaluate the speculations, about the small population of women and the domination of men and women from certain categories in the National Artists award, the possible happening of presidential bias between men or women in the nomination, deliberation, and proclamation of the National Artist

award, and lastly, the cases of the four talented artists that were never recognized in being a National Artist in the Philippines. With these three speculations, bundled with researched facts and information, and added with the author's critical analysis and evaluation, the sly issue of feminism in the National Artist award can finally be clamped open and be widened for the general public to see, evaluating on their own, depending whether the issue is benign or adverse in the development of Philippines arts. There is a lopsided issue in the population of National Artists between male and female, and the issue only expounds when delving deep into the categories of the awards. Categories are very crucial in the National Artist Award in order for the artist to be properly recognized in the field where he/she is proficient at.

There are some instances, in which sexes are sometimes correlated into its stereotype, for example, dance is particular for women, or architecture is particular for men, and so forth. This is a prevalent concept in the society today and it cannot be questioned that this is present in the awarding of the National Artists too. Out from 65 Filipino National Artists, only ten of those are female National Artist, statistically, it is estimated that only 15% of the National Artists are females. The percentage is so small that it did not even reach a half, or even a quarter of the total number of National Artists. It is even more speculated that four out of ten or 40% of the female National Artists are recognized and conferred in dance, and this only inclines to the stereotype that woman are particular or meant for dancing.

The other categories that some female National Artists were recognized were in music and theater, in which mostly women are also particular at, especially here on the Philippine setting. Only Edith L. Tiempo broke this

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stereotype when she was conferred as a National Artist in the category of Literature in 1999, and is the only one female National artist awarded outside from the scope of dance, theater, and music. Not only the female National Artists have these issues, men as well have these problems. While the female is dominating on dance, men dominated the categories on visual arts, cinema, and especially on architecture. By this, it can be concluded that men dominated the National Artists award, estimated that 85% of the Order of National Artists are men. Like Edith L. Tiempo, one man broke the stereotype as well, and that is Ramon Obusan, the only man that got recognized in the dance category, and is the only one out of the five National artists that got conferred in the dance category, since the other four are all females.

According to the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, he was a dancer, choreographer, stage designer and artistic director and also achieved phenomenal success in Philippine dance and cultural work. These speculated points does not imply that men and women are only recognized to what the society thinks men and women should be particular at, this implies that there is still a scarcity of men and women artists that can contribute to the development of Philippine arts in different branches of art. People should never be insecure on what they are good at even though society perceive it as different because of their sex designation.

Break the stereotype and be like Edith Tiempo and Ramon Obusan, an outlier into their specialized fields, but got recognized and awarded as National Artist because of it. Even though men dominated the National Artists award over women, the award is open for everyone and sometime in the future,
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and it might change due to the prevalence of feminism all over the country. Another observation, there are two female National Artists that are awarded because they got a head start from the publicity of their husbands being National artists. These two females are Daisy Avellana and Honorata “Atang” Dela Rama. It’s really odd that they were conferred years apart from their husbands. Daisy Avellana and Lamberto Avellana were co-founders of the Barangay Theater Guild which paved the way for the popularization of theatre and dramatic arts in the country, utilizing radio and television, but still they were conferred 23 years apart from each other, Daisy being in 1999 and Lamberto on 1976.

Atang Dela Rama and Amado Hernandez, on the other hand, are still distant on their conferment dates, Hernandez being in 1973 and his wife being in 1987, 14 years distant from each other. All of the four artists mentioned are very talented, but sometimes the awarding can be biased and only noticing a decade later, thus only supporting the issue of feminine discrimination present in the awards. There are some instances that there can be bias coming from the president, since the president has the power to remove or add nominees for the award.

Even though there are no recorded of this happening once, it is a possibility and this is just a major flaw from the deliberation process of the National Artists. A much better solution is to exclude the president from the deliberation process but must be included in the proclamation process, since the president is a very influential person in the country and can help in the recognition of the Filipino artists. There were actually some issues where the

president themselves removed a nominee from the National Artist short-list due to reasons unknown or just senseless.

Here are some of the cases: The mysterious reasons on the removal of RAMON SANTOS. Ramon Santos was dropped from the shortlist of nominees on May 2009, and four male artists were added for the nominations for the title via “ president’s prerogative”, meaning the president has her biases on who’s going to be the National Artists in her reign of presidency of the country. Of course, this issue inflated ending up the four artists technically conferred but the proclamation was nullified later on. The removal of Ramon Santos is still a mystery to this day, some speculations that he was removed by the Malacañang, or probably requested from Arroyo herself. Even though the reasons are unknown, it is reasonable that Ramon Santos deserved the award for his contributions in music.

President Aquino’s removal of NORA AUNOR. This was one of the most unbelievable cases of one artist being removed from the nomination. According to Aquino from Lozada and Sabillo’s story in Inquirer. net, he states that “ Sa aking pananaw yung national artist binibigyan natin ng honor na ito, puri na ito ay malaki ang ambag sa lahing Pilipino at dapat tularan,”, he is true from his statement though that National Artists should be given an honor and must perceived as a role model to others. He then followed stating “ Ang naging problema ko lang dun ay alam naman natin lahat...naconvict po sya sa drugs,” It was a direct attack to Nora Aunor. He then added the statement with sugarcoating, awing the Superstar’s talent and life story.

Despite the admiration, Aquino then stated a strong verdict about Aunor, stating “ If I made her as a national artist, how would she be as a role model?” A lot people, especially the Superstar’s fans, were infuriated by Aquino’s statement. It was a senseless conviction coming from Aquino himself. The National Artist is an award for people that had a large contribution to the development of Philippine arts, not a drug-free artist award. Aquino focused on the “ being a role model” part of the award too much that he forgot the point of the award in the first place. Nora Aunor is a wonderful, talented female artist, she deserves an award for her big contribution in the country, and she can be a great role model as an artist, not a role model of being an ex-druggie like how Aquino’s train of thought view it. The issue was infuriating but it calmed down right after, and Aunor was heartbroken on Aquino’s statement but was overwhelmed by the love of her fans. The good news is that Aunor was automatically listed in the short-list of nominees for National Artist award in this year, 2018, according to Villano of Rappler.

Humans tend to be biased and it is integrated deep in us, same also for the fact humans tend to have preconceived judgements or prejudice as well. It is not that all bad, it helps us survive as a species, but when it comes to awards and titles like National Artists award and more, it is now called being unfair. The system of deliberation for the National Artist award has a huge flaw, and that is inclusion of one person, the president, that is prone to bias and prejudice. The suitable solution: change the system and choose a more suitable system that cannot be decided by a person in any phase of the deliberation. A lot cases were recorded about the people that gets no

recognition in receiving the award or gets discriminated or misjudged in receiving the award. These people are: Nora Aunor, Vilma Santos, Rodolfo Vera Quizon Sr., and Anita Magsaysay-Ho.

They have made significant contributions into the development of Philippine arts. All of them have the passion on their work, and have integrated Philippine culture in their passions as well. Most of them did not receive the award are mostly of the following reasons: no recognition, their issues affecting other people, and ineligible to be awarded. These four talented, wonderful artists have contributed large in our country, Filipinos and their peers love them, and truly deserving to be included in the order of National Artists. Here are the five phenomenal artists: NORA AUNOR is a much deserving artist in the Philippines. A wonderful singer, film producer, and known as the Philippine cinema's Superstar for her superb acting.

Even the "The Hollywood reporter" magazine called her "The Grand Dame of Philippine Cinema" for her brilliant performance in the movie Taklub. She have also won countless awards and titles nationally and internationally, thus proving to be a worthy National artist. From Rappler's writer Joel David, Nora Aunor is truly a national artist "we deserve". She completely passed all requirements, but was delayed due only to a presidential rejection. VILMA SANTOS-RECTO is a known cinema artist and was actually a rival of Nora Aunor in her prime years in the Philippine showbiz and cinema. Since she was in touch with the Philippine cinema together with Nora Aunor in their years, it is with no doubt that Santos is a great artist, contribute greatly to the development of Philippine arts through garnering national and international, and is pretty much deserving to be included in the order of

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National Artist. According to Danielle Aquino or Star Cinema, the group Vilma Santos Solid International, Inc.

, or VSSI, has once again submitted Vilma Santos-Recto's name in the nominations for National Artist for Film. In which made Vilma really thankful for her devoted fans. Even her husband, Senator Ralph Recto supports and desires for her and Nora Aunor's to be awarded on the title.

According to Recto from Cheng's write-up in ABS-CBN news " Palagay ko sa mga darating na panahon, I think both of them with Nora are eligible to the national artist award," and followed with " I think she's eligible to the national artist award. ' Pag nauna siya, e di susunod na si Vi". Vilmanians or Vilma's fans know that she truly deserves for the title. RODOLFO VERA QUIZON SR. is a Filipino treasure in the Philippine cinema, specifically known for his antics of making his audience laugh, hence him regarded as Filipino " King of Comedy".

He is a great actor and a comedian, never failing any person to laugh and have greatly contributed to the Philippine cinema, especially in the branch of comedy. According to Natashya Gutierrez of Rappler, Dolphy is not yet entitled as a National Artist is due to his controversial gay roles and difficult selection process. Dolphy was nominated on 2009 for the National Artist award, but did not pass through in the second, much tougher deliberation level. NCCA legal counsel said from Gutierrez story, " I understand there have been issues supposedly with the gay roles he played," added with " In Dolphy's case, there was still a lot of controversy on his contributions to the art at the time he was nominated".

Like the issue from Nora Aunor, the reason was senseless, the award should be awarded based from a person's contribution to the development of Philippine arts through one's passion, and Dolphy obviously had his passion on the cinema and he greatly contributed, thus him very qualified and deserving to be a National Artist. ANITA MAGSAYSAY-HO is a Filipino painter and was the only female member of a standing group of female modernists named the Thirteen Moderns. Even in 1958, she was chosen by a panel of experts at the major painters of the country. She was a marvelous painter, in which her subject is the beauty of Filipino women dealing with everyday issues. She is truly a feministic artist in the Philippines which the sense of nationalism is still present. Her inspirations were clearly from her teacher Fernando Amorsolo, in which she was influenced to and at one point known as the "female Amorsolo" in her biography in Geringer Art. According to Merueñas from GMA News Online, she actually won from different competitions, which includes "second prize for "Five Senses" in the 1950 Manila Grand Opera House Exhibition; second prize for "Fish Vendors in the 1952 Second Watercolor Exhibition of Graphic Arts; and a number of other awards from the Art Association of the Philippines". All of these awards just directly imply into one obvious point, Magsaysay-Ho is much deserving to be a National Artist awardee in Visual arts for her outstanding paintings, and additionally for focusing in the themes of the everyday struggles of Filipinas.

She had everything, from awards to the love of country or nationalism, except for one thing, citizenship. Yes, she's a Canadian citizen, thus ineligible to be awarded by the title. It was saddening, according to the artist and gallery owner Rock Drilon, he says that it was a discrimination against

women in which he states from his Facebook post “ Biktima siya nang patuloy na pag-discriminate nang ating batas sa ating mga kababaihan... bakit ganun? Si Edades ikinasal din sa foreigner.

Hindi makatarungan,” Drilon was completely infuriated by Magsaysay-Ho’s ineligibility for the award and goes on attacking on Victorio Edades, a male National artist for Visual arts, marrying a foreigner. He then added that it was really somewhat ironic, even though Magsaysay-Ho was a Canadian citizen, her painting embodied Filipino women unlike from other National artists. According to Magsaysay-Ho herself from “ In Praise of Woman”, her biography by Alfredo Roces in 2005, she stated “ In my works I always celebrate the women of the Philippines. I regard them with deep admiration and they continue to inspire me – their movements and gestures, their expressions of happiness and frustration; their diligence and shortcomings; their joy of living. I know very well the strength, hard work and quiet dignity of Philippine women, for I am one of them”. It was disheartening; a painter that centralizes her art on Filipino women was not recognized by the country just due to her citizenship.

It could have been great if the country remove the citizenship requirement as long as the artist contributes deeply into the development of Philippine arts. She truly deserves the National Artist title, a great painter and had the passion for her art and country, and yet was not recognized. There are still actually a lot of artist that was never recognized to be a National Artist: some of which are Pelagia Mendoza y Gotianquin, the first female sculptor of the Philippines on the time 1867 to 1939, Carmen Zaragoza y Roja, an excellent and talented painter from the time 1867-1943, Paz Paterno, <https://assignbuster.com/feminism-outlet-for-female-artists-to-express-their/>

another marvelous painter of 1867- 1914, and Catalina de la Cruz, a talented, brilliant singer in the Philippines that is known for being hailed as the “ The Queen of Filipino Jazz” and as “ The Queen of Bodabil”. There are still actually a lot more artists deserving to deserve the award, but they lack popularity that is essentially needed for the requirement, which states “ Artists who enjoy broad acceptance through prestigious national and/or international recognition, awards in prestigious national and/or international events, critical acclaim and/or reviews of their works, and/or respect and esteem from peers within an artistic discipline.”, emphasis on peers that they need to be recognized and actually be nominated.

Artists, male or female, rich and poor, Filipino or not, as long as you have the artistic talent, great contribution for the Philippine arts, and the passion for the art you focus and for the country. You are eligible to be a National treasure of the Philippines, but if you don't comply with the rules of NCCA, you cannot bear the title of being a National Artist, but hoping in the future, they will soon realize the flaws. Feminism is rapidly growing, women heeding to be equals as men in rights and opportunities, though even it is now perceived badly in the media, especially on the World Wide Web, it is still an plus one on humanity for desiring an egalitarian society. Here in the Philippine setting, females should break the stereotypes tasked to them, females are not just for dancing, singing, and acting, they should try to explore. Actually, a lot of Filipinos have actually done this, I have known lots of Filipina architects, same also goes with Filipino men initiating into dancing. The Philippines has been more equal as ever then before, and it is stepping the country up into progression.

In the National Artist Award, even with male-female odd population numbers, flaws from the system resulting bias and prejudice, and cases of slight female and male discrimination, this should not stop Filipino artists from trying new. It is a new world everyday after all, create something special and with context that can help to the development of Philippine arts. Be the turning point, be the outlier, be the modern artists that will pave the way to the future of our country's art, bringing its culture, traditions, and history. The future of Philippines and its art lies in all of us, the future stakeholders with artistic minds and abilities, breaking stereotypes, and promoting equality.