If there is a branch of the Philippine culture that can be considered the underdog or the least regarded, it will be art. Many of us can at least enumerate a famous folk dance or song easily, but it is different when it comes to artworks.

Throughout the history of the Philippines there has been numerous Masters that lived, countless of masterpieces left behind by geniuses for the eyes of those who seek beauty and meaning. But these days it is pretty much inaccessible for the public, some are owed by private art collectors and some are placed of museums. Sadly, not everybody has access to these masterpieces, even art galleries and museums are not open to admire and appreciate these artworks, which is extremely unfortunate.

In MAPEH subject students are introduced to these works albeit it being brief. To understand their art, it is essential to know the person that held the brush.

Fernando Amorsolo y Cueto or better known as Fernando Amorsolo is born on May 30th, 1982 in Paco, Manila. Amorsolo is considered the first National Artist in 1972. He was recognized for painting Filipino rural landscapes and portraits. Fernando Amorsolo is the one who developed the painting technique called backlighting, used radiant colors and hues in is work which depicts the brightness of the sun. Amorsolo’s paintings are revered for the way his images and landscape glow in the canvas. Fernando Amorsolo died in 1972 at the age of 80 but despite his age and health, Amorsolo stayed creative and prolific. One of his famous works which is now displayed in the Vargas Museum inside the University of the Philippines is the “Fruit Gatherer”, a portrait of a young girl in vibrant traditional Filipino clothes holding a “bilao” of various fruits. The
art speaks loudly to the eyes of those who see, the colors pop from the canvas like having a life of its own.

Another name that made Filipino art known in the world is Pacita Abad. Abad is a Filipina artist born in the northern islands of Batanes in 1946. She graduated Political Science at the University of the Philippines. Abad is also known for her political activism during the reign of President Marcos. Her part in the demonstration of resistance against the administration led her to migrate to San Francisco where she initially took up law. However, Abad’s heart has always belonged to art. She was famous for a style of art known as trapunto wherein she incorporates different materials and texture to her art. Abad’s work is revered for being bold and colorful. Her best-known work is the Alkaff Bridge in Singapore. The bridge 55 meter long and painted by two thousand vibrant circles with different hue and look. Pacita Abad died of cancer just months after she completed Alkaff Bridge in 2004.

Not all art is painted in canvas, some are photographs that capture the very essence of the subject the intended to. The man that is revered as the Father of Philippine photography was born in 1909, he was named Eduardo Masferré. Masferré is a Filipino-Spanish who grew up in the North of Baguio City, in Sagada. His work showed and documented the lies of the indigenous people of the Cordillera Province. He was self-taught in the field of photography and only develops his maters in a makeshift improvised darkroom in his home. Masferré’s work depicts the culture of the Cordillera in such a detailed perfective that it found its way to the The Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History in Washington D.C. The extremely recognized museum houses 120 of Masferré’s work.

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