

Victor Ancheta
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Artist Statement:

In honor of my mother, who passed away alone in hospice during the pandemic, I created *Milagros' Last Dream*. In this work, I re-imagine her last moments – a peaceful dream surrounded by loved ones, ancestors, and the Brown Madonna. My vision gives my mother the proper "Buena Muerte" (a good death) that COVID-19 had denied her.

The centerpiece is a 10" x 4" painting on tin that depicts my mother in a peaceful sleep. The painting follows the 19th-century Filipino tradition of "Recuerdos de Patay," or death portraits.

Woven palm leaf birds from the Philippines surround the painting, symbolizing the souls of my ancestors. My mother believed the dead visited the living in the form of birds.

Paper roses crafted by my mother when she was still alive hang from the ceiling arranged as if falling from the sky. Roses were her favorite and my father would get them for her on special occasions. During his funeral, she carried a bouquet of them.

Six resin birds carrying figures complete the installation. The figures represent my siblings, me, and my deceased father.

In this installation, I finally have a complete family portrait, defying death and physical separation, and rendering my family whole again.

Biography:

Victor Ancheta is a gay artist, curator, and writer who grew up in the Philippines before moving to the United States. After graduating from the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, he studied Studio Art and Creative Writing at the University of Houston-Downtown. Ancheta specializes in conceptual art and works with installations, sculptures, and paintings, all of which explore his identity and his connection to religion, colonial and post-colonial history, and the dismantling of traditions. Ancheta serves as the community liaison for the Houston Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs. His role involves curating exhibitions mounted at Houston City Hall and overseeing the highly-regarded Houston Poet Laureate program.

Exhibitions:

- 2023 *Lumikha Arts Showcase - We Are Rising*, Pilipino American Unity for Progress, Houston, TX.
- 2022 *30th Annual ArtCrawl at Hardy & Nance Studios*, Hardy & Nance Studios, Houston, TX.
- 2021 *A New Landscape/ A Possible Horizon - Texas Biennial 2021*, McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX.
- 2020 *Los Refugiados: An Exhibition by Victor Ancheta* (solo), Multicultural Education & Counseling through the Arts (MECA), Houston, TX.

2020

Meditations on Loss: An Exhibition by Victor Ancheta (solo), MECA at TBH Center, Houston, TX.