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# FOSTERING COMMUNITIES

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The Creative Hubs' Potential in the Philippines









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# General Landscape

## INTRODUCTION

INITIATIVES THAT EXPLORE ARTISTIC FORMS, AESTHETICS, AND PROCESSES HAVE BEEN PERSISTING IN THE PHILIPPINE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE FOR DECADES. PRACTITIONERS OF SHARED AFFILIATIONS AND CONVICTIONS BAND TOGETHER IN FORGING STRATEGIES TO THRIVE WITHIN FRAMEWORKS WITH INSUFFICIENT AND INCONSISTENT SUPPORT FROM PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS.

By honing collaborative and multidisciplinary approaches in running their workspaces and venues, these groups or creative hubs have been able to consistently initiate, enable, and subsist. The complexly diverse and robust alternative ecology that they have created has become more than just a footnote in the country's creative context, and has steadily contributed to what exists to be the dynamics of Philippine culture and arts today.

In line with its commitment to advancing creative practices and cultural professionalism in Southeast Asia, the British Council has commissioned Ateneo Art Gallery to do an in-depth research to better understand the context, nature, and aspirations of creative hubs in the Philippines. The study aims to provide an overview of the creative hubs scene and its underlying collaborative ventures in arts and innovation.

Based on a similar study from 2016, **a creative hub is a community or 'place, that may be physical or virtual, which brings together creative people.**

It may also be a convener, providing space and support for networking, business development and community engagement within the creative, cultural and tech sectors.<sup>1</sup>

This mapping exercise further aims to provide a profile of the cities and the creative communities that dwell in them through an assessment of the hubs' directions, challenges and merits.

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<sup>1</sup> See *British Council: Hubs Report 2016*, section 1.2



## SCOPE & METHODOLOGY

### THE STUDY GROUNDS ITSELF ON THE IDEA OF 'EXCHANGE, TRANSFER AND FACILITATION OF KNOWLEDGE.'<sup>2</sup>

With this as starting point, the research looks into varying forms of hubs – as alternative spaces, makerspaces, innovation centres or coworking spaces. It has chosen to focus on nine hubs that represent unique models and processes in terms of operations and objectives within Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

The nine cases were initially selected on the basis of various artistic forms and practices, (i.e. visual arts, film, theatre, multimedia arts) that their members are engaged in, but most are artist-run spaces and art collectives due to the background of the partnering institution and its researchers. Models that promote more current creative practices and industries, such as innovation centres and coworking spaces, were also included for a more comprehensive framing. The research made sure to consider facets of multidisciplinary, so as to properly represent the varying fields and communities.

① Event at co.lab

<sup>2</sup> Qtd in *ibid.*, section 1.5



Through desk research, fieldwork and in-depth interviews, discussions with creative hubs were undertaken on their organisations' history, programmes, challenges, and contributions to identified audiences.

The study aims to offer an extensive overview of creative hubs rather than an intensive discussion of different creative practices. Fields of literature and publishing, theatre, music, film, dance and technology have their own histories and narratives as alternative ecologies, which continue to push the boundaries of practice in their own respective disciplines. In this light, this research acts as a starting point for further exploration of these spaces and elucidates possible intersections for future programmes.



2 One of the workshops held by Sipat Lawin Ensemble

3 Casa San Miguel

## GROUNDING THE CREATIVE FIELD

### THE DEFINITION OF THE ALTERNATIVE IS NEVER SUFFICIENT UNLESS SET AGAINST WHAT IT IS IN REFERENCE TO

Dr Patrick Flores identifies the fundamental meaning of the alternative to be “difference, which makes sense only in relation to other articulations of practice.”<sup>3</sup> The proposition of these substitutions may be seen in the possibility of what are outside the status quo. It asserts a filling of the gaps, in terms of methods and practices, visible to those on the ground. This search for autonomy from the prevailing machinery and hegemony is that which fuels and maintains the constant and flexible interdependency within and among the communities.

Here we see a concretisation of French theorist Pierre Bourdieu's social theory. The discussion on spaces, whether it be the mainstream or the alternative, is to touch on the idea of field, with its own set of knowledge, roles, rules and practices; or in other words, the stage where power relations interact. Directly linked to the idea of the field is Bourdieu's idea of capital, which is divided into three: 1. Economic or the monetary; 2. Cultural or the educational, familial, material and institutional; and 3. Social or the networks that one creates and hones. Each is used as a medium of exchange – reproduced and transmitted in one form or another – to navigate in the field or context where one persists.<sup>4</sup>

In culture and the arts, the industry includes market-driven entities, institutions, government and other primary determinants of what culture is today. The alternative acts as counterweight to pre-existing modalities, with aims to provide unorthodox methods in reaching out to their communities. Specifically, Eileen Legaspi-Ramirez attributes this to the “often artist-run, non- or semi-commercial, generally low-key venues...”

<sup>3</sup> In essay *Locus 1 of Transit: A Quarterly of Art Discussion Vol.2 #2*, 14.

<sup>4</sup> In essay *Forms of Capital*, 46-58.

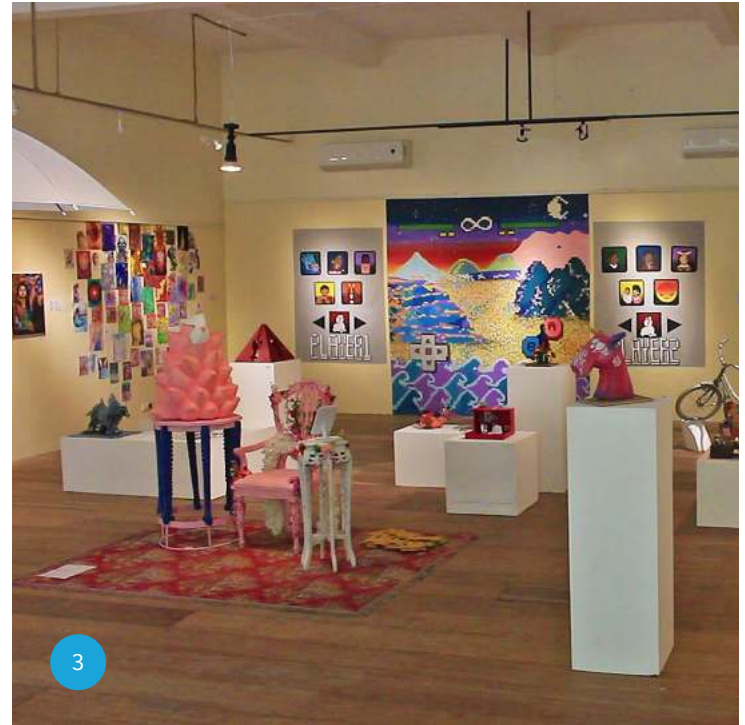
[characterised by an] overt challenging of cultural superstructures.”<sup>5</sup> Dayang Yraola further provides an apt description in seeing the alternative as “cultural commons operat[ing] with the concept of work-life nexus (creative ecologies), non-economic motivations, social reciprocity and trust-based exchanges... [where] serving their co-artists is considered their gain.”<sup>6</sup>

This is a prime specimen for the **community-driven or bayanihan<sup>7</sup> type, where flexibility, willingness, effort and time are its most important currency** in working towards an egalitarian and liberated method of creation and discussion.

Regardless of form or discipline, the impetus for the alternative remains the same.

COWORKING SPACES ARE SHARED WORKING ENVIRONMENTS THAT ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, WHICH PRESENT ANOTHER OPTION FROM TRADITIONAL OFFICE CUBICLE CULTURE. THEY OPEN THE POSSIBILITY TO SEE HOW NETWORKS ARE INTERRELATED AND SPARK UNLIKELY CONNECTIONS BEYOND TRADITIONAL BUSINESS CATEGORIES. THE FLUIDITY OF THESE COWORKING SPACES LEADS THEM TO PURSUE A VARIETY OF PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES THAT BENEFIT NOT ONLY THE CLIENTS WHO USE THEIR SPACES, BUT THE COMMUNITY THAT SURROUNDS THEM.

Since most of the businesses are contained within social entrepreneurship, development, arts, and technology, coworking spaces feed the potential of widening the network of those who utilise this new method of working.



The collaborative aspect of co-working spaces also saw the rise of makerspaces (also referred to as hackerspaces/fablabs). These spaces provide a venue for people to create DIY projects through the innovative use of technology. Makerspaces encourage the attitude of experimentation and the development of critical skills in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), through the use of electronics, 3D printing, coding, robotics, etc.

Bourdieu's three types of capital are currencies that creative hubs, knowingly or unknowingly, utilise to solidify their positioning in their respective fields. Apparent in these approaches are the allotment of value and focus attributed to each of the types of capital, which in turn becomes a measure for priorities and directions. Bourdieu's social theory is a manner of acknowledging the reality of ambivalence when it comes to using the term 'culture.' Under capitalistic ventures, the term 'culture' has been repeatedly used and abused solely for economic gain. This recognition becomes a way of filtering the intentions of those in the field. Particularly, the chosen hubs visibly ascertain an explicit slant towards valuing cultural and social capitals over the economic, without denying the latter's necessity both in their daily or project-based operations.

<sup>5</sup> In essay *Alternative Spaces: We're Here for Now of Transit: A Quarterly of Art Discussion Vol.1 #4*, 22-23.

<sup>6</sup> See *Art projects and artist initiatives as alternative platform for young global Filipino artists*, published for plantingrice.com

<sup>7</sup> *Bayanihan* comes from the Filipino word *bayan*, which means nation, state, community. The term then relates to the communal spirit seen through cooperation and collaboration.





## FRAMING THE PAST

TO TRAVERSE THESE ALTERNATIVE GEOGRAPHIES IS TO EXAMINE THE DIFFERENT HISTORICAL THREADS THAT HAVE EXISTED, PRIOR TO THE ONES IN THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE. THIS FRAMING ALLOWS FOR A FULLER VIEW OF THIS KIND OF PERIPHERAL MOVEMENT.

The visual arts, the field on which most of the chosen groups belong to, carries a long history of artist-run spaces. In 1974, Shop 6 was created and managed by conceptual artist Roberto Chabet. According to artist Ringo Bunoan, Shop 6 came about as “an attempt to address the problem of lack of alternative spaces and support for alternative art.”<sup>8</sup> She notes that the presence of these generated a “continuous dynamic” in the Philippine art scene and stood as fertile grounds for exploration and experimentation for its practitioners.<sup>9</sup>

Most relevant to the study is the prevalence of these types of initiatives in the late 1990s. Groups like Big Sky Mind, Surrounded by Water, Third Space Art Laboratory and Future Prospects turned

into an “incubator for a vital contemporary art scene, [in] provid[ing] the launching pad for young Filipino artists abroad.”<sup>10</sup>

Particular areas in Cubao, a commercial centre in Quezon City, were activated to answer to needs for such spaces in the visual arts scene. Compounds like 18th Avenue and Cubao X (or Cubao Expo) are prime examples of the community’s efforts to revitalise otherwise underutilised areas. Cubao X, originally known as the Marikina Shoe Expo in the 1970s, was transformed into rows of boutiques, second-hand stores, restaurants and artist-run spaces, such as Pablo Gallery (2005 to present) and Future Prospects (2006). Exhibitions, gigs and events are still held there, forging a specific lifestyle that caters to enthusiasts and the youth.

<sup>8</sup> Turner, 183.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> In essay *Alternative X* by Gina Fairley, published at [philippineartscene.blogspot.com](http://philippineartscene.blogspot.com)



The 18th Avenue Compound, on the other hand, has cultivated the practices of artists such as Poklong Anading, Louie Cordero, Lena Cobangbang, Jayson Oliveria, Jed Escueta, MM Yu and Gary-Ross Pastrana, among others. It was Big Sky Mind's (BSM) residency programme that introduced the aforementioned artists into the space. During their stay, BSM also hosted a series of lectures by Roberto Chabet and Manuel Ocampo, as well as performances and workshops. Projects and programmes fostered by the space included: Furball, a video production outfit (2000 to present); Cantin Plate gallery (2003/4); Abbanguard Productions; Broke/Bespoke, a fabrication enterprise of Jeremy Guiab and Pastrana that manufactured works for artists (2003/4 to present); Rugged Art Gallery (2002); and Lost Frames, an informal group of video artists that organises screenings and talks (2015 to present). Angono-based collective Surrounded by Water also resided in the compound in 2002 and held exhibitions and talks for their members and the public. Currently, 18th Avenue has a yoga studio, surf shop and studio spaces for artists including Poklong Anading and Vic Balanon. By becoming a base that hones creativity and collaborative practices, the compound imbibes the communal and grassroots spirit of creative hubs.



Conversely, coworking spaces and makerspaces are relatively novel models developed under a Western context of working.

A COWORKING SPACE CREATES  
A NETWORK THAT INITIATES  
COLLABORATION AMONG VENTURES.



This is the case with co.lab, one of the first coworking spaces in Metro Manila. Interviewing its director, Love Gregorie Perez, co.lab started with the idea of catering to local entrepreneurs and startups by providing rentable meeting and working spaces. Though most of these collaborations have only been captured anecdotally, there are many instances where co.lab members have found partners, suppliers, service providers, and collaborators from within the network. According to Perez, there is a premise in the Philippines that networks are important factors in the success of one's business endeavour. In this sense, coworking spaces provide access to a community and social capital for startups to depend on.

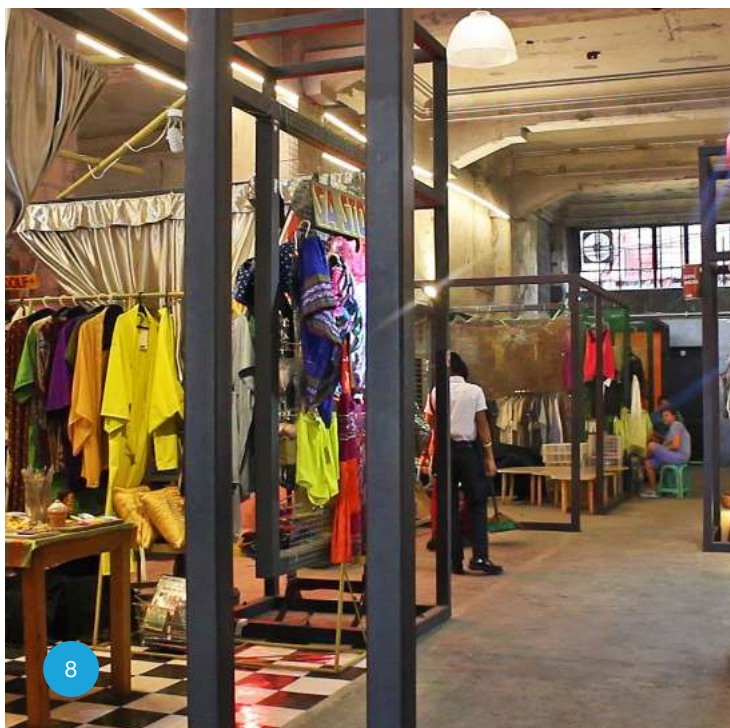
- 4 Studio residency at Project Space Pilipinas
- 5 Event at Green Papaya Art Projects
- 6 Lecture at Bellas Artes Outpost with Dr. Fernando Zialcita





For A Space, another coworking venture, CEO Matt Morrison found himself in the same predicament of finding difficulty connecting with colleagues due to the dominant cubicle working culture. Morrison claims that division in a workplace is a factor that consequently hampers creativity. This led him to opening a coworking space that aims to be at the “crossroads of innovation” that nurtures a creative ecosystem. Riding the upsurge of this business model, A Space has expanded to include two spaces in Makati City, Bonifacio Global City in Taguig, and Cebu City.

In Metro Manila, makerspaces are mostly housed in schools, public and private facilities, and museums. Catering to the public, they seek to rethink new learning experiences that help bolster ideas of individuals and startups. As one of the cases in this research, Miriam College’s Henry Sy, Sr. Innovation Center’s goal is to equip students of the college with the knowledge and skills to pursue their interests related to STEM. Private facilities such as IdeaSpace and SparkLab accommodate private entities and startups, while Mind Museum, a science museum in Bonifacio Global City, has also recently opened its own fablab to the wider public. After typhoon Haiyan wreaked havoc on the city of Tacloban, Leyte in Central Philippines, the non-profit organisation, Communitere, also built a makerspace and resource centre designed to assist the rebuilding of its local community by giving the public access to tools, knowledge, and workspace.



7 Kids Workshop at Project Space Pilipinas

8 HUB at First United Building in Escolta





Library at Bellas Artes Projects



# PROFILES

Creative Hub



98B COLLABoratory



Project Space Pilipinas



Los Otros



Sipat Lawin Ensemble



Green Papaya Art Projects



Casa San Miguel



Bellas Artes Projects



co.lab



Miriam College - Henry Sy,  
Sr. Innovation Center



## 98B COLLABoratory

98B COLLABoratory is an artist-run initiative that started in Cubao, Quezon City and is currently based in Escolta, Manila. It was founded by artist Mark Salvatus and curator Mayumi Hirano in January 2012 as a response to the need for venues for diverse disciplines across the cultural landscape.



After a residency in Yokohama, Japan, Mark Salvatus was inspired by the collaborative dynamic that transpires when artists live together in one hub or cluster. 98B began as an informal group in a house Salvatus was renting with other artists (98B as the unit number of the house). It eventually progressed to convening for programmes and events. An opportunity came for them to move to a more permanent space when one of its founding members, Marika Constantino, met with the Escolta Commercial Association, Inc., together with other heritage advocates at the First United Building in Escolta, Manila.

The building, formerly known as the Perez-Samanillo Building, is an art deco structure built in 1928 and designed by renowned architect, Andres Luna de San Pedro. It is located in a district that was a high-end commercial hub in the early 20th century. Today, it houses several art deco heritage buildings. Due to the locale and its rich history, 98B decided to relocate to the area. While unfortunate circumstances have beset the preservation of Manila's built heritage, 98B contributes by creating more awareness for the district through its network and projects that revolve around contemporary art practice.



Indeed, **98B moves as a pivot for the heritage district's transformation** by initiating the emergence of a community through their active public programmes.

Since transferring to the mezzanine floor of the building in 2012, 98B continues to be a venue for exhibitions, project and research residencies, film screenings, weekend bazaars, and informal discussions. Their activities gather visual artists, designers, and creatives together with the general public. Firmly focusing on “collaboration, experimentation, accessibility, and community,” 98B’s modest multi-functional space serves as a studio, office, shop, and kitchen. Impressively, their library, which is a repository of contributions from friends, colleagues, and international galleries and institutions, houses a plethora of art books, journals, magazines, exhibition catalogues, and audio recordings.

In 2013, 98B reintroduced the Future Market on the ground floor of the building, an informal market that gathers makers, vintage sellers, and artists. This further extended their audiences and solidified their presence in the locality. Positioning the weekly event as a response to consumerism and mass-production, Future Market gives opportunities for artists, craft makers and designers to promote and sell their products within a building and spilling out into the streets of Escolta. Their exhibition space has also occupied the storefront of the Pan Pacific building down the street of Escolta. In addition to this, 98B conceptualised Escolta Block Party, which has become a popular event among its communities. Despite 98B’s full calendar, Constantino says that there is no particular strategy for their programmes as most of these are spontaneous and organic – partly prompted by collaborations in their own networks.

98B is presently composed of Mark Salvatus, Mayumi Hirano, Marika Constantino, Gabriel Villegas, Miggy Innumerable, Katherine Nuñez, Julius Redillas, and Issay Rodriguez. This team of artists and curators has fluid roles and responsibilities shared among all of them. Some of the challenges that the group faces are the difficulty of incurring funding. Corollary to this is their identified need to officially register as a non-profit organisation in



order to easily facilitate the receipt of support and grants.

When asked of their mission in the current creative landscape, Salvatus states that **98B hopes to contribute to Philippine art history by providing an artist-run space that can create a new dimension in terms of art and exhibition making, by acting as a supporting catalyst for practising creatives' experimental ideas.**

Furthermore, the group recognises the potential of 98B as a venue for building relationships and making deeper connections. Beyond residencies and programmes, the camaraderie and kinship formed among visitors and partners are given more value.

What started as a dialogue among members of the visual arts scene has now grown to tap the immediate public within their vicinity. In the last five years since their move, their presence in the First United Building has encouraged more creative enterprises to partake in the space, slowly fulfilling the intention of generating a creative community with the hopes of instigating Escolta’s status as a living heritage district.

9 98B COLLABoratory

10 HUB at First United Building in Escolta



## Project Space Pilipinas

In 2007, following his residency in Korea, Leslie de Chavez envisioned to replicating the platform for open collaboration and creativity among members of the visual arts community in his country. He began by opening his home and studio in Mandaluyong, Manila to host residency programmes for emerging artists. Through the programme, artists were provided with time, space, and financial support to cultivate and exhibit their ideas and projects. Project Space Pilipinas (PSP) also opened the possibility for experimentation, and formal and informal exchanges among practitioners in the field. For de Chavez, it was important that skills and practices are carried over to new generations.



It was with full awareness of this landscape and its concurrent histories that PSP began. Prior to this were other independent and alternative collectives that offered programmes similar to his. Hence, to keep in accordance to his vision, he focused on operational sustainability while keeping a discreet and low profile. In order to achieve this, he studied and compared the Philippine context and ecology with other Asian countries, particularly

and ecology with other Asian countries, particularly looking into their operations, funding schemes and programmes.

As a professional artist working with galleries and institutions in Metro Manila, de Chavez maintained an atelier, which also served as PSP's headquarters in Mandaluyong until 2011. The following year, he moved back to Lucban, Quezon and decided



to reinvent PSP in his hometown. This shift in focus was due to lower overhead expenses in the province and a recognition of the need to decentralise the art scene from the capital city. Since finding his grounding in Lucban, de Chavez has activated his family's property into an area for local and international residency exchanges (i.e. NEAR, a tri-city residency with artist-run spaces in the Philippines, Jogjakarta and Kuala Lumpur); educational programmes (i.e. Palihan 2013, a two-day conversation with people from the Art Studies Department of the University of the Philippines, Diliman); exhibitions (i.e. monthly shows through SaLang in 2017); and festivals (i.e. The First Lucban Assembly in 2014, in collaboration with DiscLab). Aside from working with local and international individuals and other artist-run spaces, PSP has also teamed up with the local government of Lucban; cultural and educational institutions including National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), Southern Luzon State University, Lucban and Enverga University Lucena; and galleries such as West Gallery, Finale Art File and Silverlens Galleries.

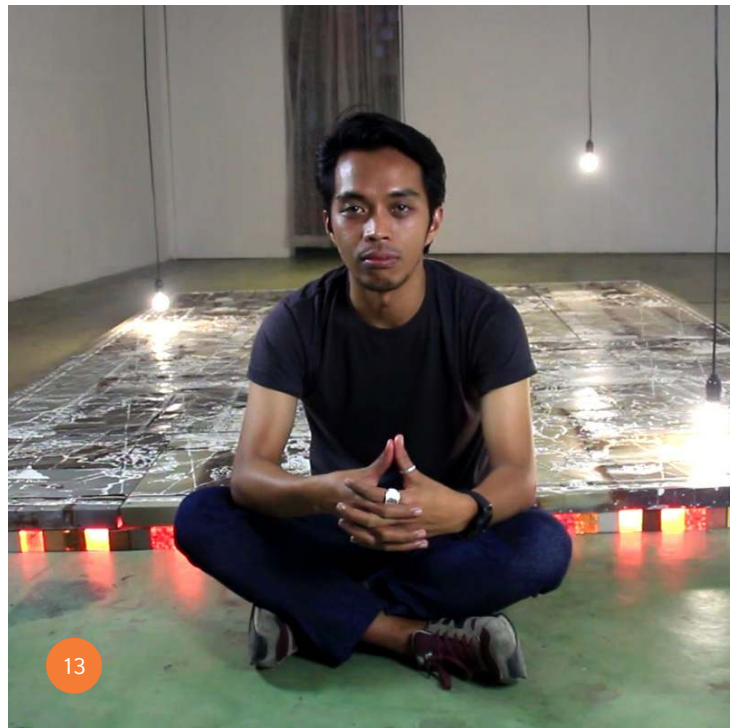
### PSP's core pursuits include community engagement, research and discourse.

De Chavez continuously works on creating and maintaining a support system not just among artists, but also cultural workers in general.

Another focus is making contemporary art accessible to the people of Lucban. He cites the 2016 exhibition of Fr Jason Dy, SJ as a prime example of creating a connection with the neighbourhood. The process involved engaging the barangay (local borough) through barter. Fr. Dy offered to exchange one kilo of rice for whatever the people were willing to trade it for. This simple exercise allowed for the promotion of openness and involvement in the community. Due to its success, the local municipality has adopted the same framework of barter in their offices. Another concrete articulation of this is through the creation of alternative classrooms with the youth in collaboration with the Lucban Artists' Guild.







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Since PSP is not officially registered as a non-profit organisation, there is difficulty in applying for institutional support. As with the initial endeavour in Mandaluyong, de Chavez subsidises daily operations, monthly production of exhibitions and programmes, and resident artist allowances with personal funds earned from his artistic practice. He manages the space along with visual artists Christopher Zamora and Jomar Galutera. The three of them make up the core team of PSP, with others volunteering on a per project or programme basis. Despite the ongoing challenges, PSP has successfully tapped the latent potential for genuine interaction and dialogue among the general public in Lucban. De Chavez's commitment to the cause has forged access and interest in contemporary art in his local community.

These avenues and connections that PSP has created fortify **PSP's path beyond the usual tracks visible to mainstream courses.**

- 11 Project Space Pilipinas
- 12 Exhibition of artist Eric Zamuco at Project Space Pilipinas
- 13 Leslie de Chavez, founder of Project Space Pilipinas
- 14 Exhibition of The First Lucban Assembly at Lucban Museum & Library
- 15 Artist talk at Project Space Pilipinas



## Los Otros

Standing unassuming in the midst of the residential area of Teacher's Village, Quezon City is Los Otros' space and home to filmmakers and artists Shireen Seno and John Torres. It functions as a studio, film laboratory, library and alternative platform for talks, workshops, performances and other live events.



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In 2005, Los Otros began as Torres' editing and production outfit along Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City, which occasionally hosted screenings for like-minded people. By 2010, since moving to their current location, Torres and Seno opened the first floor of their residence as an area for events that cater to artists, filmmakers, students and enthusiasts, while a spare room was converted to a rentable area for participants of their residency programmes. Despite a loss of personal space and privacy, the accessibility and intimacy offered by

their abode allows for an environment of informal sharing, be it of knowledge, networks or resources. A sense of community can be seen in the generous exchanges and lending of film equipment, time and efforts.



As an educational resource, **Los Otros' primary intention is to be counterweight to institutions that are dedicated solely to conventional understandings of cinema and preconceived notions of success in the filmmaking industry.**

Its undertakings, such as curated film programmes and workshops open the possibility for experimentation and intersections among interdisciplinary practices.

Although deeply rooted in film, Los Otros' playful approach in programming has also allowed a wider reach in terms of audience. For instance, in February 2016, the talk by George Clark merged topics of film, mapping and gardening. Los Otros has also curated exhibitions (i.e. Instructions: A Video Exhibition for Pablo's 10th anniversary at Pablo X, 2015) and hosted several workshops on the various analogue and handmade processes of filmmaking (i.e. 16mm Handmade Film workshop with Jangwook Lee in 2016). Film collectives like Tito and Tita were also formed from gatherings within the space.

Los Otros also maintains an archive of decades' worth of Philippine experimental film and video, which it has showcased through the 2014 screening initiative of Seno and independent researcher Merv Espina. This initiative, the Kalampag Tracking Agency, is a convergence of restored video works as well as pieces by contemporary practitioners. It highlights a variety of formats, techniques and textures explored and utilised by Filipino filmmakers in the last 30 years. This particular endeavour has been represented in numerous screenings and exhibitions: in Metro Manila (4), abroad (21), Tito and Tita exhibitions (4), Los Otros screenings (8), talks (5) and workshops (3).

Sustainability of the group, financial or otherwise, is achieved through constant and ongoing support from local and international networks honed by their own practices, as well as consistent self-funding. They have also partnered with local groups, (i.e. Green Papaya Art Projects, 98B, WSK/ Sabaw Media Art Kitchen, etc.), government



agencies, (i.e. Film Development Council of the Philippines, Cinematheque), international platforms (i.e. International Film Labs, LUX, Artist Moving Image, Rotterdam Film Fest), non-profit organisations and specific individuals in the community. Currently, aside from Seno, Torres and Espina, two interns from UP Film Studies assist them with their daily operations. Consistent funding remains a struggle for the group.



## Sipat Lawin

With formal backgrounds and experiences in theatre, it has been the primary thrust of the Sipat Lawin Ensemble, an artist-initiated and artist-run independent edge-work theatre company, to engage audiences and promote social innovation.



This is achieved through their constant redefinition of conventional notions of performance. Founded in 2009 by graduates of the Philippine High School for the Arts, JK Anicoche, Sarah Salazar, Meila Romero, Claudia Enriquez and Ness Roque-Lumbres have consistently provided the public with site-specific, experiential and participatory projects that not only uproot tradition but also develop mentoring possibilities for local and international practitioners.

**Sipat Lawin perceives every audience member as stakeholders** in its performances, which seek to lose the division between stage and audience.





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For the collective, the continuous give and take between performer and viewer is of utmost importance, shattering any hierarchy and wall upheld in traditional models of theatre. Recently, they have implemented the blank ticket approach where audiences are open to dictate how much they are willing to pay for the event. This kind of practice promotes genuine interaction and relationships that move beyond mere transaction.

Sipat Lawin's programmes are divided into three main wings: the Main Wing (season production offerings); the Children's Wing or School of Sipat (workshops and storytelling for children and children-at-heart); and Theater-in-a-Backpack (*Karnabal*, residency programs, lectures and workshops). Through performance-based activations in communities, schools, institutions etc., engagement moves beyond being a one-time isolated event and encourages extensive education for those who are interested. Sipat Lawin's choice of space and movements across a varied list of public spaces allows for a wider reach that goes beyond a specific bracket or age in society, offering an immersive theatrical experience for everyone. This can be seen in performances such as: *R'meo Luvs Juhlz: Barangay Fiesta Edition* (2011) where they collaborated with the youth leaders of Barangay 705 in Malate City; and the use of a resort and four-story abandoned bakery-turned-arts- centre for their first original work *LOVE: This is Not Yet a Music* (2012-2013).

Through the Main Wing, members are able to have a playground in terms of performance, writing or directing. Relevant issues are tackled, providing them a platform to speak of individual and collective concerns, and execute civic obligations as members of society.

School of Sipat reaches out to schools or communities. Here, they apply the Rudolf Steiner method of education, which focuses on the child as a person and as centre of the curriculum.

Theater-in-a-Backpack, which includes *Karnabal*, holds workshops and lectures for practitioners or enthusiasts interested in doing theatre, and culminates in a festival of performances. Their residency programme focuses on development and training as well as creating a network of like-minded individuals.

Despite retaining individual practices, the team consistently gives support to each other's concerns and endeavours.

A NATURAL GENEROSITY WHEN IT COMES TO TIME, EFFORTS OR FINANCES REMAINS APPARENT, FUELLED BY A SHARED DESIRE AND BELIEF IN ITS ADVOCACY.



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Evident as well is Sipat Lawin's conscious attempts to reinvent itself and the group in its approach to management, programmes, productions, etc. There is a self-awareness and reflexivity in its positioning in the larger cultural spectrum: through constant talks and negotiations about the stigmas of experimental and community theatres, and grassroots movements juxtaposed in the vocabularies and histories of traditional theatre. Thus far, it has spelled out independence through labelling what it produces as 'creative performances' and as a 'contemporary cultural laboratory'. Carving out one's own path has permitted the group a certain fluidity in method but also carries with it the weight and responsibility in its output.

Aligned to this self-awareness is the grounded sense of Sipat Lawin's daily operations. In 2011, the group registered as a non-profit entity. This has allowed them partnerships with NCCA, Japan Foundation, Asia Center and the Cultural Center of the Philippines. However, despite access to

partnerships, financial sustainability and external support for development still occasionally hit roadblocks. Having a consistent following, members also share difficulties in finding appropriate performance spaces and people, be it associates or audiences. Although their core team remains, the collective has grown to an incessantly dynamic and evolving team from different practices and paths of life.

Sipat Lawin's nondescript residence in Teacher's Village, Quezon City has become a multipurpose space for brainstorming sessions, meetings, housing for residents and studio.

Despite the lack of constant institutional support, **Sipat Lawin Ensemble has sustained its practice through openness to communal support and a shared intention to continuously develop the community and themselves.**

19 Sipat Lawin Ensemble's Ness Roque, JK Anicoche, and Claudia Enriquez

20 Theater Forward - Directing Laboratory and Gym for the Heart Workshop

21 Haring + UBU-L (2010-2014)



## Green Papaya Art Projects

Green Papaya Art Projects (GP) is a multidisciplinary artist-run platform centred on providing space for experimental mediums and forms often overlooked by convention.



In 2000, dancer Donna Miranda and visual artist Peewee Roldan opened their shared studio in Teacher's Village as the initial home for Green Papaya's programmes. Eventually in 2008, GP moved to Kamuning, Quezon City, where it currently maintains two spaces at T. Gener St. and Scout Rallos St.

Deeply rooted in the field with specific slants to their own practices, Roldan and Miranda initially tapped well-known practitioners to be curators for their space: visual arts exhibitions organised by Bobi Valenzuela and Roberto Chabet focused

primarily on honing innovative practices of emerging artists; and music programmes prompted by Manny Chavez became an avenue for live band performances. GP also supported the contemporary dance practice of Myra Beltran for performances

in non-traditional spaces; and Miranda's own initiatives such as *Wednesdays I'm in Love* (2008) and *Contemporary Dance Map* (2012). During these early years, the French Embassy in the Philippines consistently provided monetary support for their operations.



By 2010, as an unintended celebration of their ten-year presence, GP partook in an international exhibition at Tate Modern that featured alternative spaces around the globe. Alongside this, they were invited to participate in the annual night festival of Singapore. For that weekend, the Singapore Art Museum provided them with a space to recreate samplings of GP's programmes. This included performances by Radioactive Sago Project, screenings by Khavn dela Cruz, and features of contemporary dance, visual arts and digital sound. Other exchanges that year were with the independent space 24-hour Art, which involved exhibitions and residency programmes in Manila and Australia; and another with the Bronx Museum of Art for smART Power Initiative, which sent ten artists for immersions in different communities around the world. In collaboration with curators Merv Espina, Sidd Perez and Lian Ladia, American artist Mary Mattingly stayed as a fellow for three months.

Since 2010, Espina has been programme director for the space. With his extensive network of filmmakers, curators, artists and researchers, GP's direction has shifted to a more self-reflexive approach where lectures, workshops, screenings and archiving were given more importance.

**Its chief priority is to provide a support system for practitioners with no formal or established networks**, especially for fresh graduates or those pursuing innovative forms of practice.

22 Performance at Green Papaya Art Projects

23 Green Papaya's Peewee Roldan and Merv Espina



Groups like Los Otros, Planting Rice, Visual Pond, among others, have all held projects in GP. Aside from personal resources and support from their own local and international networks, GP, as a registered non-profit organisation, strategically partners with institutions and grant-giving bodies. Through the years, they have worked with NCCA, Japan Foundation, Goethe Institute, Asialink, Andy Warhol Foundation, Asia Art Archive and Prince Claus. Of course, these collaborations do not equate to dependence or loss of creative control. All programmes and projects turn into points of negotiation between GP and their partnering institutions. This, they have directly addressed through the panel discussion Peripheral Encounters which became an open space meeting between grassroots initiatives and institutional entities.

Currently, Roldan and Espina handle the programming and administration of GP with the help of three staff members and one personnel, Apid. Being non-commercial and non-profit with no direct source of income aside from the bar, Cash 272, kept open at T. Gener, funding remains to be a source of strain in their daily operations. However, there is also a recognisable confidence in being able to persevere despite this challenge. The community's continued presence and support from its networks, be it through material or humans resources, skills or knowledge, are maintained at the crux of GP's persistence.



## Casa San Miguel

Casa San Miguel (CSM) is an art centre initiated by violinist Alfonso “Coke” Bolipata in 1993. It is located in his family estate in San Antonio, Zambales.



Touring the United States as a violinist, Bolipata was invited to participate in a community-driven music education programme in the US. During his sojourn, this programme of teaching orchestral instruments and music to the youth in provincial communities gave him the idea to replicate a similar model in his hometown in San Antonio, Zambales. In the early 1990s, this area was one of the towns dependent on the American naval base in Subic and whose livelihood were deeply affected by the closing of the base in 1992.

CSM started with Bolipata giving violin lessons under the foliage of the sprawling trees in his family estate. Inviting some of the local youth, this initiative encouraged both community work and personal development. Bolipata notes that CSM's programmes benefit young musicians and other scholars not only in Zambales but those in nearby low-income provinces such as Pampanga and in cities like Tondo in Metro Manila. Beneficiaries include gifted children of farmers, carpenters, fisher folks, tricycle drivers and sari-sari store owners.



After a few years, Bolipata saw the potential of creating an art centre for the community, despite the foreseen limitations of being located in a poverty-stricken town. Starting as a training facility for young musicians, dancers, and visual artists, CSM has now expanded to a cultural centre for the region with a regular season of performances, including its summer programme known as the Pundaquit Festival. Aside from training students, the facility also offers a residency programme for visual artists, musicians, and writers who in turn participate as teachers during the training programmes.

SETTING ASIDE THE LINEAR EDUCATIONAL FORMAT OF TEACHER-STUDENT, THE STUDENTS THEMSELVES ALSO ACT AS MENTORS TO YOUNGER STUDENTS. CALLING IT 'PLAY IT FORWARD', THIS MODE INITIATES A DIFFERENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE, MASTERY AND CAMARADERIE, AND INCITES A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AMONG YOUNGER STUDENTS.

One of the galleries maintained at the space is dedicated to Don M. Salubayba, a Filipino visual artist who passed away in 2014, was a resident

at CSM who regularly taught the children in the program. There is also a community museum and other exhibition areas that house some of the artworks created by students.

Since Zambales lacks an industry for music, many of the trainees seek opportunities in the city. Some are fortunate to be able to continue their studies in music conservatories in Manila, while others end up playing for more commercial ensembles.

Nevertheless, aside from the honed desire to pursue careers in music and the arts, **what are treasured by the students is the self-confidence, personal identity, and creativity instilled by the art programme of CSM.**

Bolipata states that although funding is a constant challenge, they are also fortunate to have generous partnerships with corporations such as Starbucks Philippines, Ayala Foundation and Citibank Foundation who have been long-time donors. Yet in their own efforts to be sustainable, the art centre has also expanded to include a café, and bed and breakfast facilities as avenues for additional income-generation.







Consequently, CSM has provided much-needed livelihood to 45 employees coming from the barangays of San Miguel and the town itself. If sustainable funding is achieved, CSM aims to develop its infrastructure for future opportunities. Recently, the Department of Education expressed their encouragement for the art centre to be an arts school. This would entail expanding facilities to accommodate more students and systematising protocols. According to Bolipata, the art centre's institutionalisation will allow him to expand operations, increase enrollment, and accept support from institutions more easily. Similar to other spaces mentioned in this report, there is a need for an organisational development expertise for such endeavours.

It is imperative to acknowledge how **artist initiatives such as CSM have provided essential channels to bring arts and culture to locations that would not originally be given this access.**



24 Casa San Miguel in San Antonio, Zambales

25 Coke Bolipata, founder of Casa San Miguel

26 Students' exhibition at Casa San Miguel

27 Students of Casa San Miguel



## Bellas Artes Projects

In 2013, the non-profit foundation Bellas Artes Projects (BAP) was launched by Manila-based art patron Jam Acuzar at the heritage preservation project and hotel, Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar in Bagac, Bataan. BAP takes its name from one of the houses restored by Acuzar, the Rafael Enriquez y Villanueva mansion built in 1867, that was the first formal art school in the Philippines, La Escula de Bellas Artes. This historical building, originally located in Quiapo, Manila was the training ground of prominent 19th century Filipino artists Félix Resurrección Hidalgo and Juan Luna.



BAP aims to support the production of contemporary artists, while providing an opportunity and space to collaborate with the community of Bagac and the skilled heritage craftsmen of Las Casas Acuzar.

At the core of its programming is a mission to exhibit contemporary artworks while making heritage relatable and accessible. With this conviction, Bellas Artes Projects has been able to facilitate residencies in the last few years with international artists such as Not Vital, Hugo McCloud, John C. Gonzales, and Filipino artists Alwin Reamillo, Issay Rodriguez, and Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan.





One of BAP's current artists in residence, Cian Dayrit, exemplifies the reciprocal exchange of training between artist, community, and craftsmen. In his residency, Dayrit heavily engages with the Aeta indigenous community living in the area by way of exchanging knowledge and skills through workshops and training.

Another manifestation of this reciprocity is through artist resident, Pawel Althamer, who last year directly engaged in the Black Nazarene procession, an annual Catholic tradition set in the old Quiapo district of Manila. Althamer's art-making process incorporated live casting some of the participants of the 1.4 million devotees who flocked to the procession that year.

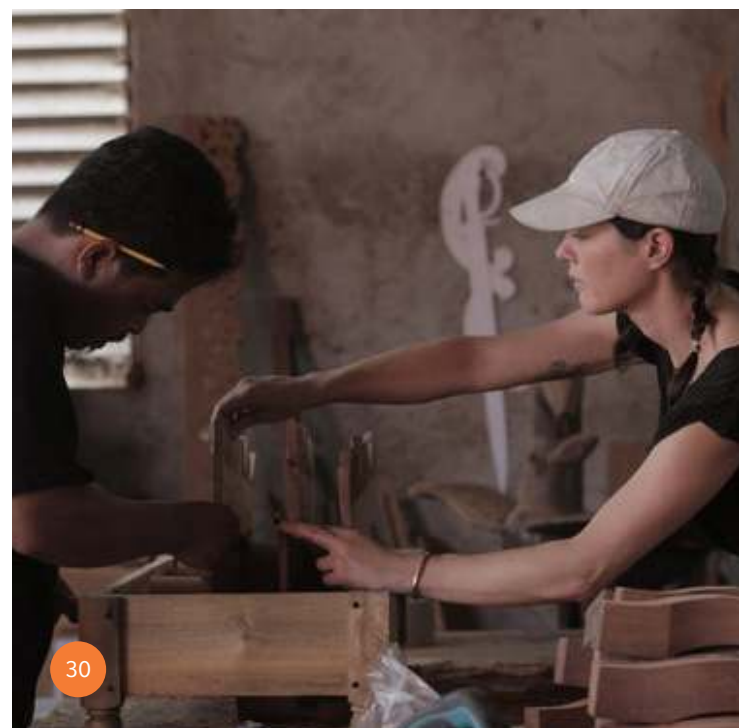
In October 2016, as a way to facilitate and extend access to Manila audiences, Acuzar opened Bellas Artes Outpost ('Outpost' for short) at Karrivin Plaza in Makati City along with Art Director, Diana Campbell-Betancourt. Taking inspiration from salons in Europe, Outpost is an exhibition and library space where talks, programmes, screenings and performances are held. Last February 2017, Outpost hosted a talk on architecture and collecting with Swiss artist Not Vital, Aurelien Lemonier, Architectural curator of Centre Pompidou and Director of the Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration, and founder of Las Casas Filipinas, Jose Acuzar. It also presented a talk on curating sound with curators Dr Patrick Flores and Daya Yraola discussing the work of composer and ethnomusicologist Jose Maceda.

As a non-collecting and non-selling exhibition space, Outpost serves as the Manila prelude to completing the whole experience with a trip to Las Casas in Bataan. It further offers an impressive library that carries topics ranging from design, architecture, art history, and contemporary art, aimed to encourage discourse among audiences.

At the moment, BAP receives its funding primarily through the Acuzar family and its business, New San Jose Builders. In the next few years, they plan to expand through partnerships with other institutions for assistance in BAP's programming and special projects. BAP also maintains partnerships with international galleries such as the Foksal Gallery Foundation and Acción Cultural Española, as fostered by Campbell-Betancourt and Acuzar's networks.

Acuzar believes that BAP has yet to make its mark, especially in Metro Manila. Through its programming, the foundation aims to bridge the gap between the local and international, and the independent and the institutional.

By localising some international art projects, **Acuzar hopes to cultivate the exposure and discourse of many Filipino communities to the visual arts field in general.**



29 Pawel Althamer's exhibition at Outpost

30 Lucy Raven, Resident Artist, at Las Casas



## co.lab

As a pioneering coworking space, co.lab has introduced to Metro Manila the value and potential of a collaborative working model in an open-space office setting. co.lab first opened its doors in Makati City, as founded by Francesca Zimmer-Santos and Danella Yaptinchay.



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In 2012, co.lab opened in its current location in Barangay Kapitolyo, Pasig City in partnership with xchange, an incubator for social enterprises that provides new models to current traditional or mainstream work settings.

Director Greg Perez muses that for business to succeed in the Philippines, it is still necessary to have a professional network that can provide connections and opportunities. For clients of co.lab, membership can jumpstart the formation of connections by providing access to communities in

different industries. This expedites members' social capital in the workplace.

co.lab's current space targets freelancers, professionals, and startups from diverse fields including tech, design, branding, and social entrepreneurship. As an alternative to coffee shops, organisations and freelancers can avail of membership packages that is comprised of a workstation, internet, refreshments, use of the pantry, printing services, and conference rooms. Workspaces include a table, stations, and office



rooms. Compared to other coworking spaces, co.lab can only accommodate a few close-door offices but offer plenty of tables for smaller groups and businesses.

What makes them unique is their **mission to create a robust community and network among their members.**

In the past, Perez recounts that co.lab's ground team of community managers, now operations assistants, facilitate introductions and interactions among members in order to foster collaborations. Through this initial network, co.lab realised that integrating itself to the locale would further solidify this sense of community. One way is by having a programme of activities that not only caters to the clients of the space but other like-minded people. This strategy further expanded their audiences. Activities include talks and lectures on topics such as design, branding, crowdsourcing, and business development. co.lab also holds film screenings and capacity-building activities for the general public such as improvisational theatre for personal development and workshops catering to businesses and individuals. Additionally, it holds open houses that invite potential clients interested in the coworking movement.

Through these initiatives, co.lab has partnered with Miguel Aranaz for Design Thinking, Sarah Queblatin of the Global Ecovillage Network for the workshop on Innovating Change, and the Japan Foundation, who facilitated the Ishinomaki Laboratory Workshop in Manila.

co.lab has also initiated a project that involves their immediate local community. As they are located along Brixton Street, the company has collaborated with a few resident startups in their space, as well as neighbouring enterprises, such as Locavore, The Fourth Wall, The Good Seed, and Heima, for the Better Brixton Project. They are currently brainstorming for programmes that would activate and innovate their area by tackling issues that affect modern living and public spaces.



Although the company employs a skeletal team composed of one operations assistant, a marketing assistant and director, the team is able to handle their daily operations. Instead, the challenges that they face include increasing public awareness not only of the space but coworking movement in general. Since co.lab has established itself as a premier coworking space, it is currently exploring other opportunities to expand its business by breaking down their own silos. This is enabled through a clear directive to go out of its physical space in Pasig by creating pop-up coworking spaces through venue partnerships. This bolsters their online community and presence in case co.lab decides to expand its venture. Given these objectives, the company has partnered with Map the Philippines, Kaya Collaborative, and Ashoka Philippines.

Creative hubs often give importance to long-term engagement with stakeholders. But as witnessed in co.lab, if the experiences of members are enriching enough, the social dimension of the interpersonal relationships built in the space constantly permeates which may offer business-oriented opportunities in the long run.

Despite the fluid tenancy that coworking spaces have, they are able to **create an environment that initiates creativity and collaboration through strategic venue and programme management.**



## Miriam College - Henry Sy, Sr. Innovation Center

The beginnings of the Miriam College – Henry Sy, Sr. Innovation Center comes from the vision of the university's president, Dr. Rosario Oreta Lopus, to direct the curriculum of the school where subjects and topics of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) are given focus in an exclusive girls school. At its core, the Innovation Center, the country's first integrated makerspace, provides definitive and tangible ways for students to learn what is discussed in a classroom setting.



From this vision of an Innovation Center, a funding partnership cultivated with the SM Foundation, Inc. was able to concretise the ambitious project. The iconic building was designed by renowned architect Ed Calma and inaugurated in September 2016.

The centre aims to incorporate and connect education and contemporary innovations with the creative industries.



Partnered with the president's vision, the university hopes to empower girls to pursue further education and careers in the sciences. Along with this, they have added an "A" to STEM to combine the Arts and is now transitioning to DREAMS (Design, Robotics, Engineering and Entrepreneurship, Arts, Mathematics, and Social Responsibility), representing a holistic education. For the centre to achieve this, it is important to have a curriculum that provides the backbone for the interest of the students. Aside from amenities and facilities, the project-based learning of the university encourages guidance from the parents, especially for elementary school students. This is supported by e-learning tools such as tablets, into which lessons are integrated.

Hand in hand with the different academic and non-academic units of the school, the centre offers trainings for their faculty in the fields of STEAM, design thinking, creativity and innovation. This model of teaching has been cascaded to other schools, both private and public, through a series of workshops.

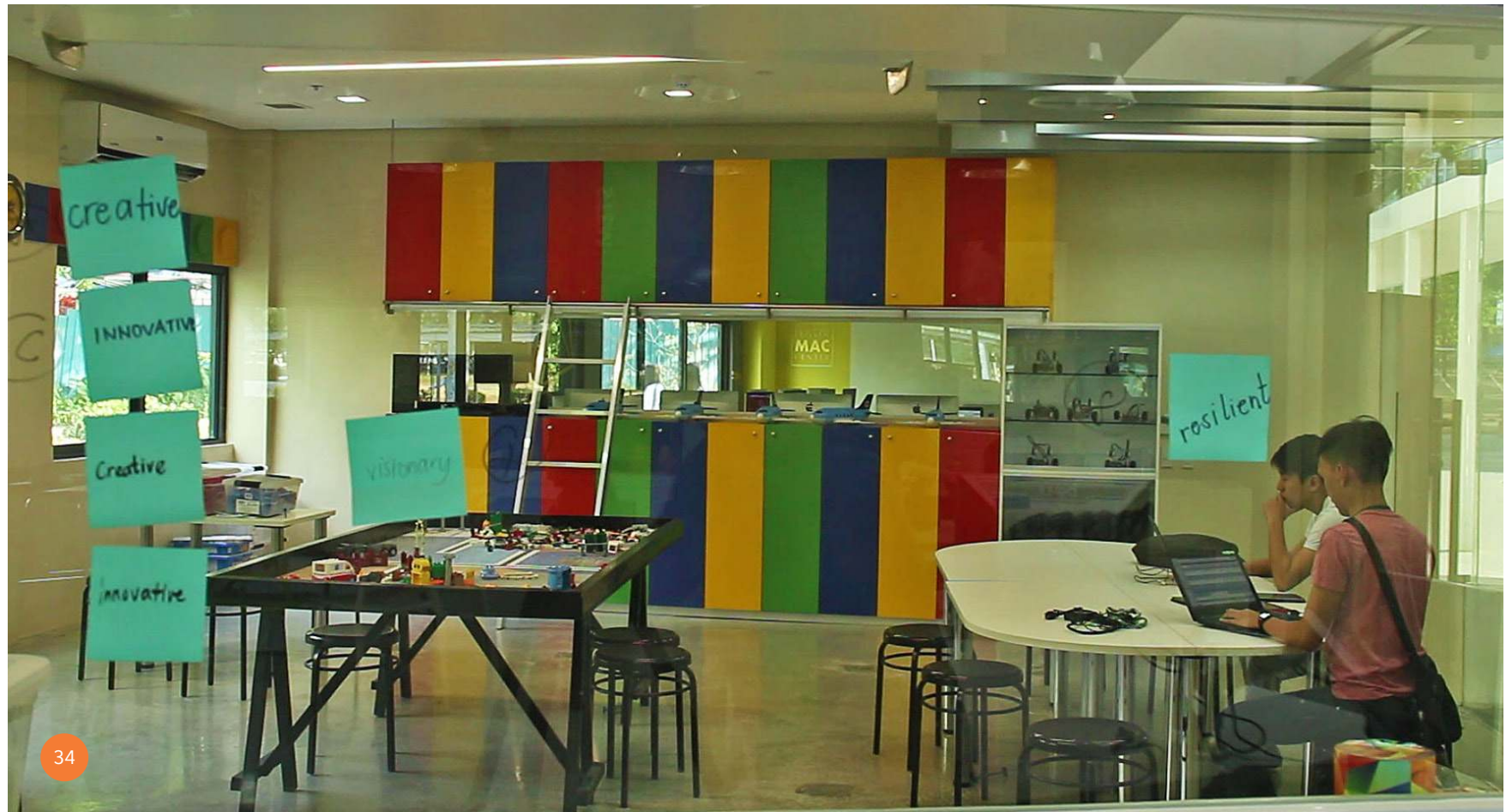
In the pre-school level, the centre initiated project-based learning through the creation of prototypes and enjoyable activities. In the lower school, science and technology classes include robotics, coding, and other problem solving activities, particularly how these can be real life applications for the community (i.e. traffic solutions in the city, disaster preparedness). For the middle school and

high school levels, lessons on programming and robotics are held, along with participation in hackathons where students create a workable software. On the college level, depending on their respective courses, students are given access to graphic design for visual arts and communications courses, and the fabrication lab to create instructional materials for teaching.

Putting up the centre's different laboratories also entailed close partnerships with other educational institutions and creative industry partners. For instance, the fabrication lab was donated by the alumni of the school. Partnering with Emerson Electric (Asia) Ltd. ROHQ, a global company for engineering equipment, the centre was able to put up its Instrumentation lab. FELTA Multimedia Inc., the exclusive distributor of LEGO, sponsored its E-Lab. C&E Publishing, Inc. subsidised the Performance Lab, and Power Mac Center for the Multimedia laboratory. The centre also includes a Makers Café in partnership with the neighbouring Center for Culinary Arts where students are given the opportunity to assist in culinary operations. There is also Innovatrium, a multi-purpose hall that accommodates workshops and bigger events. For various innovative programmes, the centre has also partnered with government sectors such as the Department of Science and Technology, and the Commission on Higher Education. Other partners include the British Council and Goldsmiths, University of London for the *Future of Creativity* public lecture. It has also worked with Bangkok University, an ASEAN partner.







Since the Innovation Center is fairly young in terms of operations, accommodating the college's different activities remains a minor challenge. Still, many teachers need to be trained to use the different equipment in the laboratories. According to the centre's representatives, these early years are crucial to better understand and improve the centre's services to the school. This would entail regular strategic planning and evaluation that can hopefully prepare it when it open its doors to the public in nearby communities.

Despite its modest team composed of one full-time employee and three concurrent ones (managers who also hold teaching positions in the college), the Innovation Center is a good example of a makerspace whose programme is integrated to a school's curricula.

It not only serves as a creative workspace but **an academic platform with the capacity to merge the creative industries with social innovation.**

Partnered with a strong vision and implementation, it can possibly move students to explore how DREAMS (Design, Robotics, Engineering and Entrepreneurship, Arts, Mathematics and Social Responsibility) can be applied to enhance everyday life.

34 Students at Miriam College learn robotics at the Henry Sy, Sr. Innovation Center

35 E-lab at Miriam College - Henry Sy, Sr. Innovation Center





Students at E-lab at the Miriam College - Henry Sy, Sr. Innovation Center



## Key Themes & Trends

THE NINE CASE STUDIES REVEAL COMMONALITIES IN THE CREATIVE HUBS' EXPERIENCES IN PROGRAMMING AND STRATEGY-MAKING. THE ASPECTS BELOW ENUMERATE CONCRETE AND INTANGIBLE FACTORS THAT ENABLE THESE SPACES TO THRIVE DESPITE THE LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT.

## Broad Strokes

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### COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

Even without the nomenclature of “creative hubs,” the significance of mapping these spaces and groups is found in their propensity to be inclusive on the ground and the social impact attained within their respective communities.

With distinct visions and advocacies, their **founders actively mobilise like-minded individuals who understand the significance of community engagement.** They provide channels for the incubation of new ideas that are cultivated by discursive immersion within a specific socio-cultural milieu.

These are exemplified by 98B's revitalisation of the First United Building in Escolta; the community-centred residencies of Bellas Artes Projects, Casa San Miguel, Los Otros, and Green Papaya; the Theater-in-a-Backpack program of Sipat Lawin; the engagement of Project Space Pilipinas with local barangays; the Better Brixton Project of co.lab; and the aspiration of Miriam College Innovation Center to extend its doors to the general public. These are all active engagements that are not only beneficial to members, but also enable the “exchange, transfer, and facilitation of knowledge” to immediate surroundings and the specific loci where they are situated.





## RELIANCE TO NETWORKS

As aforementioned, these spaces and groups depend on their networks for funding, project resources, and partnerships to implement most of their programmes. For artist-run spaces, individual residencies and fellowships facilitate networks and contacts that eventually nourish the hubs' programming visions. For Miriam College Innovation Center, the partnerships made have supplied them with the proper facilities and equipment that allow their projects to transpire.

## FRAGMENTED SPATIALLY, CONNECTED SOCIALLY

As seen in Salvatus' experience in Yokohama, creative hubs are gathered in one space or in close vicinity to one another. This creates a section or zone in the community where all local, cultural and creative businesses convene. In comparison, there would be an inherent inability for the Philippines to achieve the same set-up due to a lack of proper urban planning or zoning.

Instead of a deliberate sectioning of a locale, **the creatives' natural inclination to group together, as seen through the sharing of resources and personal connections, is what makes up a community.**

Perpetuating ideals of *bayanihan*, most of the interviewees hold reciprocal relations with other collectives in their respective fields. Merv Espina's practice, for instance, involves being Programme Director of Green Papaya, while consistently offering his time, skills and connections to Los Otros and 98B COLLABoratory. Conversely, Shireen Seno of Los Otros and Marika Constantino of 98B assist Green Papaya through programmes and projects.

## PERIPHERY/MAINSTREAM BINARY

Much has been discussed on 'alternative spaces' being positioned as entities displaced by institutions, a contention that is most assumed among artist-run spaces. However, this binary of periphery and mainstream does not necessarily cause friction between many of the artist-run spaces and institutionalised units. In fact, many of these groups maintain collaborative relationships with institutions: Sipat Lawin has consistently partnered with NCCA for performances and activities, while Green Papaya has collaborated with Singapore Art Museum and the Brooklyn Museum of Art. 98B has also worked with the Cultural Center of the Philippines for an art project in the past. It can be observed that what these artist-run spaces provide are the audiences, innovative ideas and practices, as well as content that may not be offered by mainstream establishments. For example, Los Otros, which is near the University of the Philippines Film Institute, caters to many of its students looking at avenues to fill the scarce experimental film production/appreciation currently lacking in the university's curriculum.

36 One of the workshops held by Sipat Lawin



# Confronting Obstacles

## MONETARY STRAIN

A common challenge that threads most of the spaces and groups is acquiring fiscal resources. In order to be sustainable, it is observed that especially for the newly operating artist-run spaces, many use their own resources and earnings from their practice as capital. For instance, Leslie de Chavez of Project Space Pilipinas put up the space from his personal funds and has continued to do so when necessary. Bellas Artes Projects depends on Jam Acuzar's family business for seed money, with aims of securing its own partners for future funding.

Also, many find innovative ways to sustain themselves financially. This is enabled through incessant applications for grants and partnerships that are carefully chosen to suit specific projects. For instance, 98B has found a way to create residencies wherein participating fellows subsidise their own stay. At the same time, projects such as 98B's weekend market or Green Papaya's selling exhibitions help garner further funding.

NONETHELESS, A LACK OF MONETARY ASSETS DOES NOT LEAD TO CEASING CREATIVE PRODUCTION. SOME OF THE HUBS MENTIONED THAT IT IS THROUGH STRATEGISING THEIR ACTIVITIES THAT THEY ARE ABLE TO CUT BACK ON EXPENSES.

Residency programmes provide artists their workspace and lodging within the same space, as seen in Project Space Pilipinas, 98B, and Green Papaya. This in turn creates an immersive experience for the residents. Involving interns and volunteers is convenient and cost-effective for organisations, while serving as an educational experience for the volunteers.

## ESTABLISHING ORGANISATIONAL & OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

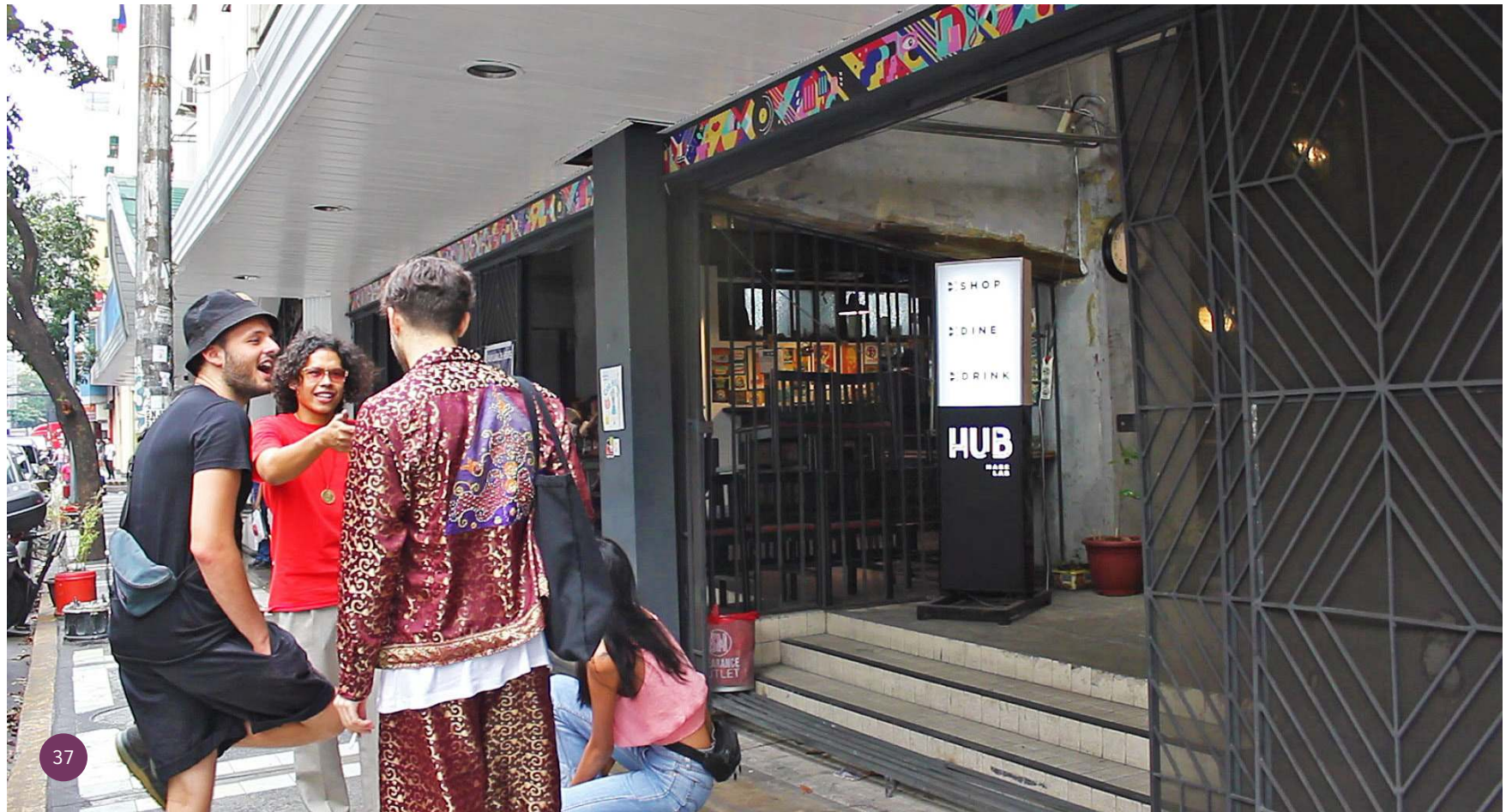
The fluidity in structure seen in these groups and spaces allows for ease in adapting to the different needs and circumstances they face. However, it also becomes a limitation in the efficiency of their operations. This is not to say that there is a deficiency to the current structure, as regularity is still maintained in their operations. Although, it is important to note that streamlining procedures would be beneficial as this will provide a clearer and more convenient workflow within the organisation.

Since many of these hubs do not depend on a hierarchical system of the traditional corporate structure, many of them employ a more "organic" route where the dynamics in the space are more horizontal in approach. This can be seen in the roles and tasks that are exemplified by 98B, wherein a team of eight does not have specific roles.

Corollary to this as well is the lack of the organisational structure and business acumen when registering as a non-profit organisation. Governmental and institutional recognition, as exemplified by co.lab and Miriam College Innovation Center, opens avenues for partnerships, sponsorships and grants. It gives them the leverage to be on the same playing field as the private and public entities, as also experienced by Green Papaya, Bellas Artes Projects, Casa San Miguel, and Sipat Lawin Ensemble.

Although the current structure works for them, these spaces acknowledge that change may be inevitable. Miriam College Innovation Center knows that since it has only opened operations recently, there would still be operational adjustments required of them. Casa San Miguel also notes that there is a need for a stronger organisational structure to ensure sustainability in the future.





## Echoing Influences

Impact can be measured in the hubs' participation and engagement with their communities and the general public.

By assessing this, the research can posit possible directions for future research on creative hubs. Nonetheless, it has been pointed out that in-depth interviews may not be sufficient in assessing impact since not all hubs hold consistent evaluations of their work. It is recommended that a quantitative and qualitative study, perhaps through immersion and a survey of targeted communities, be employed. For now, what this research can supply are vignettes and experiences culled from interviews, which shed light and create leads for further impact studies.

### OPENING EDUCATIONAL POSSIBILITIES

One impact can be witnessed through **new educational techniques that often defy traditional structures.**

In a school setting, the makerspace in Miriam College Innovation Center has become an educational platform that fosters STEAM. This is a deliberate strategy to equip the students of the school for young women with a renewed interest and passion for the field, which is for the most part a field dominated by men.

On the other hand, Sipat Lawin Ensemble has challenged conventions of theatre by bringing their performances and workshops to more popular platforms. This democratisation of theatre, unraveling its elitist tendencies, has made Sipat Lawin accessible to more varied audiences, notably to the marginalised youth in communities. Both organisations exemplify the 'exchange, transfer and facilitation of knowledge' that creative hubs illustrate by adapting more specifically to the niche and community that they cater to.

RESPONDING TO COMMUNAL NEEDS

On the local level, these creative hubs are seen to have affected their communities’ livelihood, tourism, and education. This aspect is more distinctly observed in the provinces, where Casa San Miguel and Project Space Pilipinas reside. For the former, being the premier arts school in Zamboanga allows the youth to learn about music and arts, which is a rare opportunity outside cities. Transforming its space into a commercial venture, specifically through a café and bed and breakfast, has not only boosted local tourism but the livelihood of communities in the area. For the latter, the collaboration between local artists and municipal government is epitomised in the adoption of the framework that artist Fr Jason Dy, SJ organised with the barangay. Project Space Pilipinas has also been a consistent venue for discourse and discussion on contemporary art, providing otherwise unattainable access to the public of Lucban.



REIGNITING LOCALITIES

The most visible impact may be perceived in the involvement these hubs take to revitalise local neighbourhoods. This is witnessed in the apparent change 98B has contributed to Escolta by making the place more desirable for other creatives to establish their own practices and offices in the area. It is important to mention that in order to affect this change, the group needed to immerse and involve themselves in the community over several years’ time.

INCREASING THE VALUE OF THE SOCIAL DIMENSION MEANS ACKNOWLEDGING THE NEEDS OF THE LOCALITY TO BE ADDRESSED.

This is also evident in co.lab’s *Better Brixton Project*, which looks into collaborating with other entities in their immediate community for its fruition. Although different in trajectories, with Better Brixton focusing on addressing aesthetic and practical challenges aimed at making the street more ‘liveable’, and 98B activating the streets through art projects, weekend markets and block parties, both share the same drive and sentiment – to reshape communities by unlocking their unique potentials.

38 Workshop at 98B Conservatory



# Recommendations

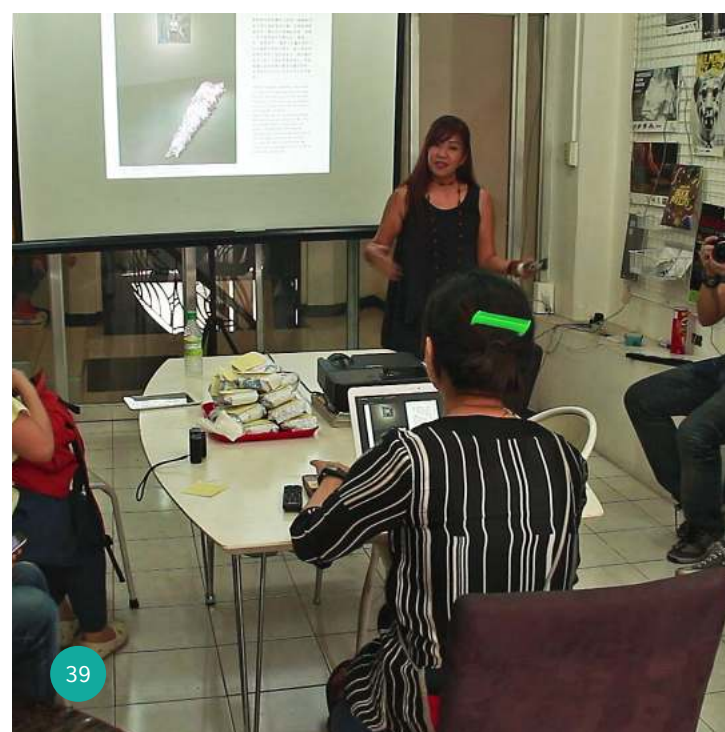
ASSESSING THE IMPACTS AND CHALLENGES THESE HUBS FACE, THE STUDY IS ABLE TO PROVIDE AN AVENUE TO TACKLE RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW AN ORGANISATION SUCH AS BRITISH COUNCIL CAN SUPPORT CREATIVE HUBS. IN LINE WITH BORDIEU’S FORMS OF CAPITALS, THE RESEARCH SAW THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THESE ENTITIES TO SUSTAIN AND GROW ALL POSSIBLE ASPECTS OF THEIR ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, AND SOCIAL CAPITALS.

These parallel the following recommendations:

## RE-DEPICTING “CREATIVE HUBS”

Ateneo Art Gallery and British Council held a roundtable discussion on 27 June 2017, inviting representatives from the case studies along with other creative hubs in Manila. Attendees included Reymart Cerin of Public School Manila, JK Anicoche of Sipat Lawin Ensemble, John Torres and Shireen Seno of Los Otros, Jam Acuzar of Bellas Artes Projects, Marika Constantino of 98B, and Jayson Alcaarez of the Philippine Science High School-Fab Lab.

Taking off from this roundtable, one of the comments given was to reevaluate terminologies and starting points when defining creative hubs. The aforementioned definition coming from a British Council report on UK creative hubs was found by the participants to be inaccurate in describing the current context and dynamics grounded in the Philippine setting.



Two changes were proposed relating to physical space as opposed to the inclusion of virtual spaces; and the replacement of the term ‘business development’ to ‘sustainability.’ The participants stressed the importance of physical spaces,

whether or not structured, to carry out their work. To them, the visibility and identity that having a physical space brings legitimises the hubs' presence among audiences and communities.

The term 'business development' on the other hand was deemed too profit-oriented due to its focus on the economic and monetary aspect of development, which can cause conflict with the advocacy efforts of the groups. Emphasis instead was put on 'sustainability' or longevity of an organisation through good management and the ability to create and deepen relationships with partners, audiences and beneficiaries.

Hence, the following redefinition was suggested:

**'A creative hub is a place which brings creative people together. It is a convenor, providing space and support for networking, sustainability, and community engagement within the creative, cultural and tech sectors.'**

### EXPANSION OF NETWORKS

The dependence of creative hubs on networks requires creating the possibility to widen them in order to gain visibility and access to opportunities, such as potential partnerships with corporate entities and cultural institutions both local and international. At the same time, it may be beneficial to initiate platforms that can assist this expansion. For instance, 98B and Green Papaya collaborated for the project Peripheral Encounters, which aimed to link artists' groups, organisations and initiatives with cultural institutions. It allowed institutions to acquire a knowledge of the general landscape, which may lead to points of compromise and collaboration.

For instance, a recent direction has been the proliferation of Fablabs supported by state such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) as an endeavour to bolster economic growth. Figured as a way of increasing competition in micro, small, and medium enterprises, Fablabs imbibe the potential of catering to prototyping and modeling requirements. The first Fablab launched by DTI was



at the Bohol Island State University, which was also a collaborative effort between the Department of Science and Technology, the university, and the tutelage of Japan's Keio University.

DTI Cebu Provincial Office also hosted the first Philippine Fablab Network Conference with the theme "Building Communities to Accelerate the Innovation Economy" last January. Focusing on 'innovation, digital fabrication, collaboration and expanding the maker community in the country,' it gathered 12 Fablabs that DTI has supported in the last two years. Last April 2017, with the aim of 'facilitating greater trade and investment,' DTI teamed up with the ASEAN Economic Community Pillar to organise panel discussions, talks and forums that explore creative hubs, which includes Fablabs, as spaces for innovation and urban development.

CONSEQUENTLY, IT IS NECESSARY THAT CREATIVE HUBS ARE PERMITTED TO PUSH FOR THEIR OWN DIRECTIONS AND ARE NOT SUFFOCATED BY INTERVENTIONS. PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS WITH THESE GROUPS, AND THE FACILITATION BETWEEN THEM WOULD MEAN COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT THAT DOES NOT IMPEDE CREATIVE PURSUITS.





This open line of communication may be most beneficial in the relationships cultivated with local cultural institutions, such as British Council, through the creation of programmes that foster dialogue. This platform may also benefit transdisciplinary reciprocity among other creative hubs and fields (i.e. use of artist-run spaces of makerspaces or coworking spaces).

### DEVELOPING ORGANISATIONAL PROTOCOLS

The challenges mentioned relating to funding and resource generation may be addressed by recognising and adopting basic business acumen such as entity/business registration, tax matters, etc. Acquiring this status would make creative entities eligible for grants and donations. The study recommends training workshops, in terms of organisational development and protocol that can suit the creative hubs' unique workflow, programming and goals.

Many of the spaces and groups may have different needs for training. Some artist-run spaces see the necessity of being part of a bureaucratic structure in order to be eligible for funding and resources especially from international institutions. For instance, Casa San Miguel finds the need for guidance in terms of its organisational infrastructure to ensure future sustainability.

A certain type of training may assist entities to review current procedures and find innovative ways that will allow them to reach targets and objectives.

### FACILITATION IN FUNDING

As seen in the previously listed challenges, funding can both be a hindrance and trigger to creative solutions in the implementation of creative hub programmes. Although many of the groups have much experience in grant application, collaborative partnerships, and fundraising activities, this research notes that these are sporadic funding streams, often focused on per project support. Hence, a long-term financial scheme would be ideal, as this assures longevity and sustainability in terms of allowing for full time employment and means for daily operations.

39 Artist Talk at 98B COLLABoratory

40 First Rizal Sighting exhibition by Sipat Lawin Ensemble at Luneta Park

41 Workshop at Bellas Artes Projects





Workshop at co.lab





## Conclusion

### THIS TREND OF THE ALTERNATIVE HAS FOSTERED A SEEMING ‘PURITY’ OF EXPRESSION AND ADVOCACY.

Through the research’s cross-disciplinary sampling, conditions that feed and hinder the existence of these groups and spaces are exposed. Apparent needs of their niche are consistently addressed by focusing on creating platforms for discourse, accessibility, and collaboration. The cycle of interpersonal relations nourishes the subsistence of these hubs, where openness to new avenues of creativity becomes a way of directly and indirectly redefining the status quo.

Despite challenges, these creative hubs continue in their work of fostering the communities that they have built or are supporting.

The industries produced by their efforts are secondary; instead the significance lies on the satisfaction of current needs not only of the groups but of the community at large. The hierarchy of values come pronounced, with social and cultural capitals upheld over any possible economic return. This perpetuation of a shared passion among the constituents of the different groups reveals strength and a determined belief that goes beyond mere stability or career growth. Creativity is stimulated and sustained by the people who have dedicated their practices to these causes, in spite of the sparseness of institutional support.

# Directory – Selected Creative Hubs

## ASPACE MANILA

Coworking Space

- ★ Workshops, talks, gallery space
- 🔗 98-B.org
- @ Through website or Facebook Message
- 📍 110 Legazpi Street, Makati City, Metro Manila

## ARTBOOKS.PH

Bookstore

- ★ Talks, workshops
- 🔗 artbooks.ph
- @ info@artbooks.ph
- 📍 123 Pioneer Street, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila

## ART LAB: ATELIER CESARE AND JEAN MARIE SYJUCO

Experimental Art Facility

- ★ Multi-media performances, exhibitions, studio
- 🔗 facebook.com/artlabmanila
- @ artlabmanila@gmail.com
- 📍 327 Country Club Drive, Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City, Metro Manila

## ARTERY ART SPACE

Alternative Space

- ★ Exhibitions, talks
- 🔗 arteryartspace.com
- @ arteryartspace@gmail.com
- 📍 102 P. Tuazon Blvd., Cubao, Quezon City, Metro Manila

## BACKTOSQUARE1

Cross-disciplinary Artist Platform

- ★ Exhibitions, talks, workshops, talks, conferences
- 🔗 backtosquarejuan.org
- @ backtosquare1.2013@gmail.com
- 📍 No permanent space

## BELLAS ARTES PROJECTS

Visual Arts Space and Residency

- ★ Residency, talks, exhibitions, events
- 🔗 bellasartesprojects.org
- @ hello@bellasartesprojects.org or Facebook Message
- 📍 *Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar* Brgy. Ibaba, Bagac, 2107 Bataan and 2nd Floor, Building C Karrivin Plaza, 2316 Chino Roces Ave. Makati, Metro Manila

## BETTER LIVING THROUGH XEROXOGRAPHY (BLTX)

Alternative Publishing Group

- ★ Small press expo, talks and forums
- 🔗 facebook.com/xeroxography
- @ Facebook message
- 📍 No permanent space

## BRAINSPARKS

Coworking Space

- ★ Networking, startup hub support and mentoring
- 🔗 brainsparks.ph
- @ brainsparksph@gmail.com
- 📍 Pres. J. P. Laurel Highway, Tanauan, Batangas City

## B-SIDE MANILA

Compound of Retail Shops, Restaurant, and Events Place

- ★ Events
- 🔗 bsidemanila.com
- @ anna.bside@gmail.com
- 📍 7274 Malugay Street, Makati, Metro Manila

## CANVAS

Exhibition Space and Publishing House

- ★ Exhibitions, talks, publications
- 🔗 canvas.ph
- @ info@canvas.ph
- 📍 1 Upsilon Dr. Ext., cor. Zuzuaeggui Street, Capitol Hills, Quezon City, Metro Manila

## CASA SAN MIGUEL

Arts Center

- ★ Residency for visual artists and musicians, arts school, exhibitions, performances, cafe, and bed and breakfast
- 🔗 casa-san-miguel.org
- @ Through website or Facebook Message
- 📍 Evangelist Street, Barrio San Miguel San Antonio, Zambales

## CO.LAB

Coworking Space

- ★ Workshops, talks, screenings
- 🔗 colab.ph
- @ info@colab.ph or Facebook Message
- 📍 3/F Unit 301, #3 Brixton Street, Kapitolyo, Pasig City, Metro Manila

## COMMUNITERE

Community Resource Center

- ★ Tool lending library, makerspace
- 🔗 communitere.org
- @ info@communitere.org
- 📍 Crisostomo Subdivision, Barangay 92, Apitong, Tacloban City

## CONSPIRACY GARDEN CAFE

Restaurant and Events Place

- ★ Performances, workshops, exhibitions
- 🔗 conspi.net
- @ conspi.cafe@gmail.com
- 📍 59 Visayas Avenue, Quezon City, Metro Manila

## CUBAO EXPO

Compound of Retail Shops, Restaurants and Galleries

- ★ Bazaars, gigs, exhibitions, workshops
- 🔗 facebook.com/cubao.expo
- @ Facebook Message
- 📍 Gen. Romulo Street, Araneta Center, Cubao, Metro Manila



**DISCLAB**

Multidisciplinary and Virtual Platform

- ★ Exhibitions, workshops, publications
- 🔗 [discussionlab.org](http://discussionlab.org)
- @ [discussionlab@gmail.com](mailto:discussionlab@gmail.com)
- 📍 Virtual

**EREHWON CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

Alternative Space

- ★ Exhibitions, talks, workshops
- 🔗 [erehwonartcenter.com](http://erehwonartcenter.com)
- @ [info@erehwonartworld.com](mailto:info@erehwonartworld.com)
- 📍 1 Don Francisco Street, Villa Beatriz, Old Balara, Matandang Balara, Quezon City, Metro Manila

**ESCUELLA TALLER**

Vocation School

- ★ Educational programs, tours, publications
- 🔗 [escuellataller.org.ph](http://escuellataller.org.ph)
- @ [info@escuellataller.org.ph](mailto:info@escuellataller.org.ph)
- 📍 Revellin de Recoletos, Victoria Street, Intramuros, Manila

**FABLAB BOHOL**

Fabrication Laboratory

- ★ Workshop and studio offering digital fabrication
- 🔗 [fablabasia.org](http://fablabasia.org)
- @ [fablabbohool@gmail.com](mailto:fablabbohool@gmail.com)
- 📍 Bohol Island State University - Main Campus, CPG Avenue, Tagbilaran City, Bohol

**LOS OTROS**

Space for Visual Arts and Film

- ★ Residency, film screenings, talks, workshops
- 🔗 [facebook.com/losotrosfilms](https://facebook.com/losotrosfilms)
- @ [losotroslab@gmail.com](mailto:losotroslab@gmail.com)
- 📍 59 Mahabagin Street, Teacher's Village East, Quezon City, Metro Manila

**MAKERSPACE MANILA**

Makerspace

- ★ 3D Printers, STEM Workshops, Sciencae kits
- 🔗 [makerspacemanila.com](http://makerspacemanila.com)
- @ [hello@makerspacemanila.com](mailto:hello@makerspacemanila.com)
- 📍 2F Bldg. B, Ayala Malls Solenad 3 Santa Rosa, Laguna

**MIRIAM COLLEGE HENRY SY, SR. INNOVATION CENTER**

Educational Platform with Makerspace and Fabrication Laboratories

- ★ Workshops, talks, facilities for students of university
- 🔗 [mc.edu.ph](http://mc.edu.ph)
- @ Ms. Gay Runas: [gcrunas@mc.edu.ph](mailto:gcrunas@mc.edu.ph)
- 📍 Miriam College, Katipunan Avenue, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Metro Manila

**PERFORMATURA**

Festival on Performance and Literature

- ★ Performances, workshops, film screenings, book fairs
- 🔗 [ccpintertextualdivision.tumblr.com](http://ccpintertextualdivision.tumblr.com)
- @ [ccpintertextuadivision@gmail.com](mailto:ccpintertextuadivision@gmail.com)
- 📍 CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, 1307 Pasay City

**PHILIPPINE SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL FABRICATION LAB (PISAY LAB)**

Fabrication Lab

- ★ 3D Printing, robotics
- 🔗 [pshs.eurekaphil.com](http://pshs.eurekaphil.com)
- @ Facebook Message or Call (02) 929 1603
- 📍 Philippine Science High School Quezon City, Metro Manila

**PINEAPPLE LAB**

Art Space, Events, and Performance Value

- ★ Residency, workshops, talks, events, performances
- 🔗 [pineapplelab.ph](http://pineapplelab.ph)
- @ [info@pineapplelab.ph](mailto:info@pineapplelab.ph)
- 📍 6071, R. Palma Street, Barangay Poblacion, Makati, Metro Manila

**PLANTING RICE**

Multidisciplinary and Virtual Platform

- ★ Exhibitions, workshops, talks, online source, archive
- 🔗 [plantingrice.com](http://plantingrice.com)
- @ [editors@plantingrice.com](mailto:editors@plantingrice.com)
- 📍 Virtual

**PROJECT 20**

Alternative Space

- ★ Exhibitions, performances
- 🔗 [instagram.com/20maginehawa](https://instagram.com/20maginehawa)
- @ [20maginehawa@gmail.com](mailto:20maginehawa@gmail.com)
- 📍 20 Maginhawa Street, UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila

**PROJECT SPACE PILIPINAS**

Artist-run Initiative and Visual Arts Platform

- ★ Exhibitions, talks, workshops, residency
- 🔗 [projectspacepilipinas.com](http://projectspacepilipinas.com)
- @ [projectspacepilipinas@gmail.com](mailto:projectspacepilipinas@gmail.com)
- 📍 No. 6 Eleazar Street, Lucban, Quezon

**PUBLIC SCHOOL**

Design Studio

- 🔗 [publicschoolmnl.com](http://publicschoolmnl.com)
- @ [info@publicschoolmnl.com](mailto:info@publicschoolmnl.com)
- 📍 First United Building, Manila

**SIPAT LAWIN**

Performing Arts Ensemble

- ★ Residencies, performances, workshops
- 🔗 [sipatlawinensemble.com](http://sipatlawinensemble.com)
- @ [sipatlawin.ensemble@gmail.com](mailto:sipatlawin.ensemble@gmail.com)
- 📍 No permanent address

**SPARKLAB**

Makerspace

- ★ Studio, machine and technical support
- 🔗 [sparklab.ph](http://sparklab.ph)
- @ [info@sparklab.ph](mailto:info@sparklab.ph)
- 📍 118 Matahimik Street, Teacher's Village, Quezon City, Metro Manila

THOUSANDFOLD

Multi-platform Space for Contemporary Photography

- ★ Workshops, talks, exhibitions, library, studio
- 🔗 [thousandfold.org](http://thousandfold.org)
- @ [info@thousandfold.org](mailto:info@thousandfold.org)
- 📍 No permanent space

VIVA MANILA

Art and Culture Organization

- ★ Tours, performances, workshops
- 🔗 [vivamanila.org](http://vivamanila.org)
- @ [vivamanila1@gmail.com](mailto:vivamanila1@gmail.com)
- 📍 Intramuros, Manila

WE CUBE

Coworking Space, Collaborative Platform

- ★ Community and networking events
- 🔗 [wecube.ph](http://wecube.ph)
- @ [hello@wecube.ph](mailto:hello@wecube.ph)
- 📍 Coherco Corporate Center, 4th Floor, Bldg., 116 V.A. Rufino Street Legaspi Village, Makati, Metro Manila

WSK

Festival of Digital Arts and New Media

- ★ Concerts, performances, lectures, workshops, artist talks
- 🔗 [facebook.com/WSKFestival](https://facebook.com/WSKFestival)
- @ [fetedelawsk@gmail.com](mailto:fetedelawsk@gmail.com)
- 📍 No permanent space

98B COLLABORATORY

Residency Program for Visual Arts

- ★ Residency, film screenings, talks, workshops, weekend market, performances
- 🔗 [98-B.org](http://98-B.org)
- @ [hello@98-b.org](mailto:hello@98-b.org)
- 📍 413 Escolta Street, Mezzanine Level, First United Building, Manila

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Touchscreen projector at the Henry Sy, Sr. Innovation Center



# FOSTERING COMMUNITIES

The Creative Hubs'  
Potential in the Philippines

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