



## TAMBAY

In April 2019, Mark Valenzuela, Pablo Capati, and Babbu Wenceslao will take up residence at the University of Tasmania's School of Creative Arts to create a collaborative work especially for the Triennale. Combining ceramics, sculpture, drawing and performance, *Tambay* will centre on a small structure that references the street-side stalls common to the artists' home country of the Philippines.

Street stalls in the Philippines offer a range of inexpensive goods and services. Many vendors sell products in micro quantities, allowing customers to purchase a single egg, cigarette, or piece of candy. Petrol is likewise available in small amounts and sold in recycled soft drink bottles, while vulcanising stalls provide cheap roadside repair services. Fresh meat and fish are also common items – with every cut for sale and nothing going to waste. *Tambay* will be littered with such references, from wheel thrown bottles to hand-built pigs' heads and trotters. Here the entrepreneurial ingenuity of street vendors becomes a means to explore a broader culture in the Philippines of making creative use of limited resources. Unlike the tendency towards specialisation in Australia, people in the Philippines commonly work across a number of trades and develop a multitude of skills in order to fully utilise the resources available to them. The artists consider the impact of this culture on their own multidisciplinary practices, and more specifically their engagement with clay.

Street stalls in the Philippines perform a social function, as well as an economic one. Often incorporating a place to sit, they act as public spaces where people can gather to talk. The Tagalog word *tambay* (or *istamby*) is derived from the English term 'on standby' and is commonly used to describe those individuals who spend their days hanging out at such spaces, for lack of work, school or other 'productive' activity. The current Philippine Administration has recently attempted a crack-down on *tambays*, characterising them as drug users and criminals to justify police harassment and the imposition of curfews.

In this work, however, the artists consider the educative function of such public spaces, particularly for individuals who are experiencing poverty and don't have access to formal education or employment. Once again, the artists draw parallels between this cultural context and their approaches to art making. Valenzuela articulates,

"for each of us, our formal education has been supplemented and perhaps exceeded by the alternative learning that comes from spending time with artist peers and communities, and in working collaboratively. This more communal way of living and working is very much reflective of the broader cultural context of the Philippines."

Located in the forecourt of PW1 for the duration of the Triennale, *Tambay* will likewise function as a place for people to gather or take some time out. The artists will be present at the installation, performing various daily activities and welcoming visitors to interact with them and their work.

## BOXPLOT

Boxplot is a flexible curatorial project that provides visual artists from Australia and Southeast Asia with opportunities for collaboration, exhibition and exchange. Founded in 2013 by Mark Valenzuela and Anna O'Loughlin, the project began with a series of independent exhibitions held in alternative spaces that connected artists from Australia and the Philippines. Since this time, Boxplot has curated exhibitions, projects and residencies both independently and in partnership with art spaces in Australia, the Philippines, Singapore and Indonesia.

In addition to cross-cultural collaborations, a key curatorial focus of Boxplot is contemporary ceramic art, with an emphasis of experimental and diverse approaches to making and curating. To this end, Boxplot has curated a series of exhibitions of contemporary ceramics and in 2018 launched the 'Homebrew Ceramic Residencies' in South Australia for emerging artist from the Philippines.

## Mark Valenzuela

Mark Valenzuela's interdisciplinary practice explores forms of conflict, dominance and resistance. These explorations are informed by Valenzuela's experiences growing up in army base camps in Mindanao, Philippines, and respond to the current socio-political contexts of the spaces he inhabits. Combining ceramics, drawing, painting and video, Valenzuela's installations utilize a vernacular of repetition, mutation, and reconfiguration to interrogate power and stratagems for its disruption.

Born in Pagadian City, Philippines, Valenzuela has exhibited widely in his home country, his current residence of Australia, and internationally. In recent years, he has exhibited at Vargas Museum (Philippines), Adelaide Central Gallery for the OzAsia Festival (Australia), the Northern Centre for Contemporary Art (Australia), and the National Gallery of Indonesia for the 3rd Jakarta Contemporary Ceramics Biennale. Valenzuela was selected to exhibit in the Special Projects section of Art Fair Philippines 2017, for which he received the Karen H. Montinola Grant. He is a recipient of the 2015 Cultural Center of the Philippines Thirteen Artists Award.

In addition to his own art practice, Valenzuela co-curates Boxplot - a curatorial project that provides artists from Australia and Southeast Asia with opportunities for exhibition, collaboration and exchange.

[www.mark-valenzuela.com](http://www.mark-valenzuela.com)



New Folk Heroes, Mark Valenzuela, 2016, stoneware with underglaze, porcelain, concrete, wood, castors, fake lawn, photographer, James Field, courtesy of Adelaide Central Gallery.



*Violently (installation 1)*, Mark Valenzuela, 2016, stoneware with underglaze, concrete, terracotta shards, photo courtesy of Artinformal, Manila.

### Pablo K. Capati III

Pablo Capati's ceramic practice centres upon the rigorous and demanding method of wood firing. Using an anagama kiln that he constructed at his studio in San Jose, Philippines, Capati fires his works for a number of days so that the unglazed forms obtain their colour and texture from the flames and melted fly ash. A sense of wholeness and immersion within environment resonates throughout Capati's work, which includes both functional and sculptural ceramics. From his anagama-fired stoneware to his recent use of porcelain, Capati's biomorphic and archaic forms reiterate a deep connection with the elements.

Born in 1975, Capati's introduction to ceramics began in Japan where he lived as a teenager. In 1995, whilst studying Business at the University of Southern California, Capati returned to studying ceramics but it was not until some years later that he dedicated himself full-time to his artistic practice. In 2000, Capati established the San Jose Batangas Studio, where he continues to work on his own practice and undertake a regular program of workshops and activities for local and international ceramic artists and students. Capati has exhibited widely in his home country of the Philippines and internationally.



*Memories of Kumachan (detail)*, Pablo Capati, 2015, stoneware, refractory bricks, photographer, Melvyn Calderon.



*To Attend and To Celebrate*, Pablo Capati & Mark Valenzuela, 2018, stoneware clay, underglaze, porcelain slip, stain, stencils and found objects, photographer Alycia Bennett.

### **Babbu Wenceslao**

Babbu Wenceslao is an artist based in the city of Dumaguete in the island province of Negros Oriental, located in the Visayas region of the Philippines. He finished his Bachelors in Painting from the University of the Philippines Cebu College in 1995. He has organised and facilitated several local art workshops, and has taught in Silliman University's College of Performance and Fine Arts. In 2012, he organised the 12th biennial of the VIVA ExCon (Visayas Islands Visual Arts Exhibition and Conference) in Dumaguete as project director. His creative concerns explore value and relevance of common subjects like culture, environment, geography and identity. His works also utilise a range of materials, from conventional to video, wood, steel, fibreglass, and terra cotta. Currently, he teaches as an adjunct professor in Foundation University's School of Architecture and Fine Arts.



Babbu Wenceslao working with local clay in his studio in Dumaguete City, Philippines. Photograph by Alma Alcoran.

Tambay is supported by:



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