

The Bagasbas Beach International Eco-Arts Festival



Concept and History

The BBIEAF was established primarily to create locales of close and sustained interaction leading to camaraderie and inter-cultural learning between artist and community. It seeks to expand the repertoire of problem-solving tools of both artist and community while at the same time present environmental issues as foci of implied or actual interventions. Seeking to challenge the traditional view of art, this festival strives to change lives for the better using Art and Interaction as the media. Through the democratization and the demystification of art, it urges its mobilization and of all its connections, its networks, its meanings, its supporters and practitioners, to apply its principles on everyday, ordinary, regular life and alleviate poverty as well reduce inequalities in society, or at least, provide roadmaps to it. In short, it provides an opportunity where Art can Function instead of just Pose; where it can come down from its high perch and actually be of practical use to its human hosts. On the medium term, it seeks to create an upliftment of the quality of life not only on the artistic side but also on the socio-economic side through the formation of partnerships and the encouragement of environmentally-friendly processes of production. Sustainable livelihood projects and product developments are important sequelae to the festival.

This festival, in its direct links with the communities, also recognizes the presence and the influence of local governments, both provincial, municipal and barangay. In fact, the barangay government forms the major block with which the participation of each community is decided, arranged and occurs.

For its first festival in 2003, the BBIEAF was purely a grassroots festival participated in by artists and communities interested in its goals of grassroots self-sufficiency and sustainability through functional and directed Art-making. It was a solo undertaking of the teaching-training institution, Our Lady of Lourdes College Foundation located in Daet, Camarines Norte (www.ollcf.org). There were no other partners.

Curated by Dr. Reuben Ramas Canete, five Filipino and one Australian artists were selected to work with six barangays (or villages) most of them coastal. The 2003 Installation Artists and the Communities are as follows:

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| Freddie Aquilizan | PHI | Barangay Uno, Mercedes, Camarines Norte (CN) |
| Hermisanto | PHI | Barangay Taba-Taba, Basud, CN |
| Henri Cainglet | PHI | Barangay Dagot-dotan, San Lorenzo Ruiz, CN |
| Edille Paras | PHI | Barangay Lag-on, Daet, CN |
| Ronaldo Ruiz | PHI | Barangay Bagasbas, Daet, CN |
| Tony Twigg | AUS | Barangay Camambugan, Daet, CN |

From 2003, the BBIEAF has expanded its participation as well as its partners, with the entry of the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) in the 2008 edition. And with continued support from its founders/organizers, the BBIEAF has become one of the biggest and most important art festivals in the country, and of its kind, maybe in the region. For sure, it is the only one that seeks closest ties with its participant communities and looks beyond the festival to a more equitable life for them.

For the 2008 BBIEAF, the following Artists and Communities were involved:

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| Hitoshi Yamafuji | JPN | Barangay Mangcawayan, Vinzons, CN |
| Sarah Tse | CHN | Barangay Bagasbas, Daet, CN |
| Kawayan de Guia | PHI | Barangay Uno, Mercedes, CN |
| Claro Ramirez | PHI | Barangay San Jose, Talisay, CN |
| Mark Salvatus | PHI | Barangay San Jose, San Vicente, CN |
| Wire Tuazon | PHI | Barangay Borabod, Daet, CN |
| Ashley Thorner | USA | Barangay Lourdes, Daet, CN |

Media coverage of the events has been excellent, with both local, national and international coverage in print, TV and internet.

Thus far, aside from the help coming from the NCCA, the festival has been mainly sponsored by its founding institution, the Our Lady of Lourdes College Foundation (OLLCF) under its president Dr. Abundio P. Palencia, Sr., twice-awardee for community service by two University of the Philippines Diliman alumni bodies.

But this festival is still a work in progress. There is a lot to work on to justify its *raison d'être*. If there is one thing that the Festival is currently hard at work on, it is the strength, effectivity and functionality of the residuals of the festival. It is not enough to have a show and get people together in the hope that somehow, some glorious connection will be made that will make life better the next day. There will have to be concrete sequelae which will justify the rhetoric and the passion of this festival. Granted that these relationships between artists and communities sometimes become so deep that communication lines between them are open for years after the festival, it is still the hope of the festival that the after-effects will be bigger, better and include more people it.

Thus the festival sees the need to widen its reach and invite NGO's and civic organizations both here and abroad to participate in the art-making and at the same time, keep an eye out for opportunities to pursue the mandates of their institutions within the participative goals of the festival. Cross-pollinations of ideas leading to intercultural understanding and livelihood and other socio-economic upliftment projects, would be a desirable outcome. It is still Art at work, just viewed from another perspective. It is the conviction of the organizers that including symposia and other social learning and information dissemination events to future festivals would be enhancements to the goals of the BBIEAF. It is the 2010 BBIEAF that the Center for Empowered and Sustainable Poverty Alleviation (CESPA) finally found the opportunity to participate. Concurrent with the festival itself, the CESPA gathered civic, developmental, banking, environmental and livelihood groups, public and private, to put together free seminar-workshops designed to concretize the possibilities of livelihood and a better life over five days.

Also for the 2010 installment, again with the cooperation of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), the organizers have also seen it fit to expand the Festival from its original single event, the Installation Arts, to three events. Included in the 3BBIEAF are the Video Art Section and the Public Art Furniture. The Video Arts was curated by Takahiko Iimura, the foremost pioneer of video art from Japan who was honored with a mini-retrospective of his works while curating a selection from the Tokyo Video Art Center from young Japanese video artists. Sixteen video artworks from all over the world including Canada, Iraq, Italy, France and the USA was previewed from June 3-6 around the town of

Daet using the local transport called “tricycle” as a moving video environment as well as the blank building walls in and around the town. The Public Art Furniture section was participated by a Japanese environmental artist and one from the Philippines.

The event was well received by media including partners, the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Manila Bulletin, Homestyle Magazine, Business World and ABS-CBN.

The following were the participants of the 3rd BBIEAF:

Installation Art with their respective community within Camarines Norte:

Emmanuel Herbulot from France– Brgy. Pambuhan, Mercedes
Tanya Preminger from Israel – Brgy. Bagasbas and OLLCF, Daet
Matthew Slaats from USA – Brgy. Bulhao, Labo
Chak Chung Ho from HK SAR China – Brgy. OLLCF, Daet
Stuart Frost from UK – Brgy. San Jose, San Vicente
Irma Lacorte from Philippines – Brgy. Mangcamagong, Basud
Mia Orsag from Croatia – Brgy. Borabod, Daet

Video Art:

Takahiko Imura – Japan
Lia Chavez – UK
Javier Creix – Spain
Clint Enns – Canada
Mark Franz – USA
Renaud Hallee – Canada
Herman Kolgen – Canada
Lemeh 42 – Italy
Mariano Leotta – Italy
David Montgomery – USA
Joas Sebastian Nebe – Germany
Julia Oldham – USA
Jessica Houston – USA
Bruno Tremblay – USA
Resmi Al Kafaji – Iraq
Leslie Supnet – Canada

Public Art Furniture:

Tetsu Ohnari – Japan
Jerusalino Araos - Philippines

The Asia Europe Foundation (www.asef.org) is currently documenting the BBIEAF as one of Asia's best practices for environmental advocacy.

We are now on the threshold to the 4th BBIEAF 2012. At this point we would like to spread the message of the festival – self-sufficiency, equitable development and a better relationship with Nature - to all the communities in the world, most especially to its Asian and ASEAN neighbors. We believe that a deeper understanding of alternatives to the current developmental models the world is utilizing can only deepen the effectivity of developmental efforts and widen choices to finally resolve long-standing socio-economic problems with the use of new weapons like innovativeness, creativity and the high technical

standards of Art-making.

Aside from the Installation, VideoArt and Public Art programs, BBIEAF 2012 seeks to add music, fashion and new media programs in order to create a more encompassing effect on everyday life, and to extend the sensibility of “art for development” to more sectors of the art/design world, resulting in a more concerted effort from more sectors of society.

Your Participation

We now look towards our neighbors and seek closer partnerships in learning experiences and deeper inter-cultural understanding. The BBIEAF 2012 would therefore like to invite our neighbors not only as participating artists or curators but as participating communities. We seek the help of governments and other public/private institutions to be able to select communities ideal for the BBIEAF, bring international artists to immerse in these selected communities and then, fly the artist and a few members of the selected communities to Daet, Camarines Norte, Philippines for the festival proper.

We also seek your participation in the CESPAL Livelihood+Environment seminar-workshops that will run concurrently with the festival. We seek the fruition of this dream with your involvement.

The moving spirit of the festival is using Art as a Tool for Human and Community Development. With your country’s participation in this festival it would further the urgency of this project in line with the United Nations Millennium Goals, and heighten close cooperation amongst our countries to foster hope, make life better and integrate Life, Art, Technology and Sustainable Growth and Development.



Dr. Joaquin Gasgonia Palencia
Executive Vice-President, Our Lady of Lourdes College Foundation, Daet, Camarines Norte
Founder and Executive Director, BBIEAF