



DAVID MEDALLA: GENDER, IDENTITY AND SEXUALITY IN HIS WORKS. LECTURE WITH PURISSIMA BENITEZ- JOHANNOT

David Medalla: Gender, Identity and Sexuality in his Works Lecture with Purissima Benitez-Johannot

within the framework of the exhibition *David Medalla. Parables of Friendship*

Thursday 14 July, 7 p.m.

Free entry. [Registration via Eventbrite necessary](#)

The lecture will be held in English

On **Thursday 14 July at 7 p.m.**, in the exhibition space *David Medalla. Parables of Friendship*, Purissima Benitez-Johannot—lecturer in the Department of Art Studies at the University of the Philippines Diliman and founder, archivist and curator of the MiraNila Heritage House and Library—will give the lecture 'David Medalla: Gender, Identity and Sexuality in his Works' (Museion, 4th floor, free admission with FFP2 mask).

Described, upon his passing in 2020, by Southeast Asian art historian Patrick Flores as an '*indispensable figure in the prehistory of the contemporary, one who, with a playful sensibility and broad sympathies, mediated the local and the modern in all their complications*', in a career spanning sixty years, David Cortez Medalla, with incredible ease and success, broke many barriers in Europe through the lens of gender, identity and sexuality.

David Medalla: Gender, Identity and Sexuality in his Works explores the figure of the artist from his context of origin, a country where sexual and gender diversity is recognised as part of life. In the Philippines, as in many other places in Southeast Asia, the most important religious leader is believed to be the babaylan -- a woman, or a man dressed as a woman.

The babaylan has played important roles in spiritual and harvest rituals in communities and is considered wise, benevolent, and endowed with extraordinary abilities, notions that have been diminished by colonial values and education and that, with the arrival of globalisation, bring new dimensions to the view of gender and sexual identities.

Purissima (Petty) Benitez-Johannot is a professorial lecturer in the Department of Art Studies at the University of the Philippines Diliman and the founding archivist/curator of the MiraNila Heritage House and Library. Over the



*past forty years, she has worked for the Museum of Philippine Art and the Ayala Museum in Manila, Independent Curators Incorporated, the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Barbier-Mueller Museum in Geneva. She has edited and authored numerous books and articles on contemporary and ethnographic art, and is the curator and co-author of *The Life and Times of Purita Kalaw-Ledesma* (Vibal Foundation, 2017), awarded Best Book on Art for the 37th Philippine National Book Award, organised by the National Book Development Board. She serves on the board of directors of the Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc, the Lopez Family of Balayan Foundation and the UP Diliman College of Arts and Letters Foundation, and is president of the Benitez-Tirona MiraNila Foundation.*