



# Castlemaine State Festival: Focus on the Philippines

March 17-26th Castlemaine. Australia

From a carefully curated program of films from the world's oldest film industry, to a specially created sculpture from one of the Philippines most exciting young artists, to a diverse compilation of videos and moving image works from across the Philippine archipelago, this year's program uncovers the real history and promising future of an exciting nation. The 2017 program shines a bright light on the Philippines featuring a program of film, visual and socio-political artworks. Exploring Australia's connection with the country, with more than 100,000 Filipino Australian living in Victoria alone, these works delve deep into the cultural layers of the country. Crossroads - a thoughtfully curated program of award-winning and highly acclaimed Filipino films, assembled specifically for the 2017 Castlemaine State Festival, will provide unique insight into Philippine cinema and the country's eventful and intriguing past. With the Filipino film industry widely considered to be the oldest in Asia, the films selected for Crossroads reveal the complex relationships between Filipino film and Philippine society, and how potent social forces and film have the capacity to influence one another with eight film screenings at the Theatre Royal from the 18-25 March. Curated especially for the 2017 Castlemaine State Festival, periSCOPE is a compilation of videos and moving image works from across the Philippine archipelago. The collection has been compiled by 98B COLLABORatory, a multidisciplinary artist-run initiative that seeks to establish a convergence between artists, designers, curators, writers, activists, educators and the general public. The works selected by multiple curators from across the Philippines, with the resulting compendium showcasing diverse glimpses and peripheries as seen through many lenses, offer rare insight into regional contemporary Filipino art production and demonstrate a striking range of themes, geographies and cultural issues. One of the Philippines' most exciting young artists (with past works including a special commission for Lady Gaga), Leeroy New will create a temporary sculptural installation called La Puerta Del Laberinto (The Door to the Labyrinth) combining visual arts, fashion, film and theatre for the exterior of the Castlemaine Art Museum. Leeroy New is one of the Philippines' most intriguing young artists. In 2008 Leeroy won the prestigious Ateneo Art Award and was invited to take up a six week residency in 2009 at the La Trobe University Visual Arts Centre in Bendigo. In 2017, he returns with this ambitious new project which responds to the unique characteristics and context of place and will be made with recycled materials collected from the local area. Festival Director, Martin Paten says: "The Philippines could be seen as an unusual choice of country to feature, but it's a fitting choice I feel to follow-on from our Cuban program last festival. Like Cuba, the Philippines has been heavily influenced by American and Spanish colonial culture, and has suffered significant political division and controversy. But most importantly, Australia has extremely strong connections with the Philippines. There are more than 400,000 Filipino / Australians, of whom almost a quarter live in Victoria, and yet we know so little about the country." "The Philippines is not a favoured holiday destination for many Australians - but it could be. And we can only be enriched by knowing more about the cultural layers of this diverse nation - with a population of over 100 million and more than 7000 islands producing a wide range of artistic riches. I feel so excited by this year's international relationship with artists and their works from The Philippines."

The 2017 Castlemaine State Festival runs from the 17-26 March. Visit: <http://castlemainefestival.com.au>

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