

Filipino Stories Take Center Stage

FilAm Creative Film Festival Returns for a Powerful Fourth Year

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER



Photos by Mic Diaz

The **FilAm Creative Film Festival (FACFF)** returned for its fourth year October 2–4 at the Luckman Fine Arts Complex at Cal State LA, bringing Filipino and Filipino-American filmmakers, artists and audiences together for two days of films, conversations and industry programming during **Filipino American History Month**.

Opening day featured short films and a discussion on creativity and responsibility in Filipino-American storytelling, followed by the U.S. premiere of *Treasure of the Rice Terraces*. The documentary follows Filipino-Canadian filmmaker Kent Donguines to Buscalan, Kalinga, home of legendary *mambabatok* Apo Whang-Od, in a deeply personal exploration of Filipino identity, Indigenous tradition and the importance of preserving culture.

On October 3, the festival continued with additional shorts, the “Inside the Industry: From Vision to Screen” panel and the feature *Mabuhay*, offering another perspective on Filipino-American identity, family expectations and pursuing a creative path.

Led by Festival Director Charles Jon Gray and a team that includes Angel Quinsay, Rommel Rojas and Christianne Sykes, FACFF has become more than a place to screen films. The festival continues October 4 with its Awards Night Gala, bringing filmmakers and the creative community together to celebrate this year’s work and recognize its honorees. Four years in, FACFF continues to create a space where Filipino stories are seen, filmmakers connect and a new generation of Filipino voices can take center stage.

COMMUNITY

Kapwa Square: Filipino Pride Takes Its Place in the San Fernando Valley

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER

The intersection of Roscoe Boulevard and Woodman Avenue in Panorama City now carries a name with special meaning for the Filipino-American community. On October 1, the first day of **Filipino American History Month**, community leaders, organizations, students and residents gathered for the dedication of **Kapwa Square**, a new City of Los Angeles designation recognizing the Filipino-American presence and history in the San Fernando Valley.

The word *kapwa* reflects the Filipino value of shared identity and interconnectedness—seeing oneself in another. The designation was championed by **Los Angeles City Councilmembers Imelda Padilla and Ysabel Jurado**, the first Filipina elected to the Los Angeles City Council. The celebration brought together community organizations, city employees, students and supporters who helped make the recognition possible.

Among those participating were representatives of the Pilipino Workers Center, Los Angeles Filipino Association of City Employees (LAFACE), Filipino Migrant Center, BAYAN, Knights of Columbus, St. Genevieve Valiant Voices, Filipino-American Chamber of Commerce Greater Los Angeles (FACCGLA), Kaiser Permanente, American Ranch and Seafood Supermarket and professor Dr. Joe Bernardo along with students and other members of the community.

The gathering reflected the very idea behind *kapwa*: generations and organizations coming together around a shared identity and a commitment to making the Filipino-American community more visible.

Continued on Page 2



Photos by City of L.A. Council District 6 Staff

COMMUNITY

Kapwa Square: Filipino Pride Takes Its Place in the San Fernando Valley (Continued from Page 1)

The corner has long been familiar to Filipino families in the Valley, with Filipino businesses and community life becoming part of the neighborhood over the years. The Pilipino Workers Center, which opened its first San Fernando Valley community hub in the area, is among the organizations helping strengthen that presence.

For many who gathered at the dedication, the significance was not simply seeing a new name on a street sign. Kapwa Square gives Filipino-Americans a physical landmark that acknowledges their place in the history of Los Angeles, while giving younger generations something visible that connects them to the community that came before them.

More than a name on a street sign, Kapwa Square creates a visible place for Filipino-American history in Los Angeles. As the community celebrates Filipino American History Month, the dedication served as a reminder that representation can also be found in the places where people live, work, gather and build community.



Photos by Mic Diaz

CHAT WITH MIC

Caren Mempin: Finding Strength Through Music

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER

Behind singer **Caren Mempin**'s powerful voice is a story of sacrifice, perseverance and a lifelong commitment to music. In her second appearance on *Chat With Mic*, Mempin opened up about the experiences that shaped her journey—from childhood singing competitions in the Philippines and performing professionally in Japan to rebuilding her life and pursuing music in Southern California.

One of the most emotional moments of the interview came when Mempin recalled losing her father and later her sister, who had been one of her greatest musical inspirations. She shared how her sister encouraged her to pursue her dream of becoming a singer, even as she faced personal and financial challenges. Her sister's passing in 2022, around the time Mempin competed in Discovery Philippines, remains a defining moment in her life.

Mempin reflected on her experiences in singing competitions, including StarQuest, Discovery Philippines and the International Indian Icon competition in Chicago, where she reached the grand finals and received a Judges' Choice recognition. She spoke about overcoming self-doubt, learning from other performers and finding encouragement from audiences of different cultural backgrounds. Throughout her life, including in Los Angeles, she also experienced bullying and criticism, but

refused to let the negativity discourage her from pursuing her passion for music.

Beyond music, Mempin discussed her commitment to helping others, including supporting feeding efforts for children in Butuan City and extending assistance to communities abroad. She emphasized the importance of humility, kindness and treating people with respect, reminding aspiring performers that talent alone does not determine success.

As the conversation turned to her future, Mempin shared her excitement about releasing her original single, "Sana Ay Ikaw Na Nga," with a concert scheduled for October 9 at The Noyptz Bar & Grill in Long Beach. After years of interpreting other artists' songs, she hopes to build a collection of original recordings inspired by her own experiences. Our conversation on *Chat With Mic* revealed an artist whose greatest motivation comes not only from performing, but also from honoring her family, pursuing her dreams and giving back.

DON'T MISS OUT!

Check out the full interview in *Chat With Mic* on the Mic Diaz Presents Youtube channel.



New conversations every week on *Chat With Mic* Talk Show at Mic Diaz Presents Youtube Channel



CHAT WITH MIC Episode 83: Caren Mempin



Photos by Mic Diaz and Amilee Tarn

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Illura Showcases Aesthetic Wellness in Porter Ranch

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER



Illura Health & Wellness, a medical aesthetics and wellness clinic, welcomed guests to its Porter Ranch location October 3 for a Grand Introduction and Open House, offering visitors an opportunity to meet owners **Mike and Samantha Layson** and learn more about the technology, treatments and services available at the med spa.

Rather than a traditional grand opening, the event focused on introducing guests to Illura's treatment technology, particularly the equipment used for skin rejuvenation and aesthetic services. Illura offers treatments including Morpheus8, which combines microneedling with radiofrequency energy, along with laser and other aesthetic treatments designed to address a range of skin concerns.

Among those attending were Miss Philippines USA titleholders and pageant organizer Lou Razon, MC Aesthetics CEO Marlou Colina, and Gemma Bergstrom, representing the Filipino American Chamber of Commerce Greater Los Angeles and Greater Pasadena chapters, along with friends, relatives and members of the community.

The afternoon also had a distinctly social and Filipino flavor, with food from neighboring Cajun Ni Kuya, a taco bar and even a feng shui reader, which became an entertaining attraction for guests. The open house allowed Illura to introduce not only its services, but the people and technology behind a growing health, wellness and aesthetics business in Porter Ranch.



Photos by Mic Diaz

CREATOR SPOTLIGHT

Mia Mahal: Finding Her Voice Through Music and Healing

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER



For singer-songwriter **Mia Mahal**, music has always been part of her life. Growing up in a family of musicians, she spent her childhood playing the piano, singing and performing alongside her siblings. In a recent interview on *Chat With Mic*, Mahal shared how her journey led her from classical piano and group performances to songwriting, self-discovery and a new direction in music inspired by sound healing.

Mia Mahal began writing songs at 15 with her sister Lulu, performing with their girl group. Influenced by Original Pilipino Music (OPM), R&B and jazz, she developed a songwriting style rooted in personal experiences. After setting aside her musical ambitions to focus on her career

and raising her children, she returned to songwriting in 2019. Her 2022 album, *Back to Me*, explored love, relationships and the importance of rediscovering oneself.

Her creative journey eventually introduced her to sound baths. Inspired by an experience at Kin Unified Healing in Walnut, Mahal pursued training as a sound bath facilitator and began incorporating her singing voice into sessions, harmonizing with singing bowls and creating melodies. This exploration inspired her upcoming single, “On the Other Side,” scheduled for release on October 10. Produced in collaboration with New York-based producer Theory Is Everything, the song will serve as the lead single for a sound healing album she hopes to release in November. For Mahal, her journey is a reminder that it is never too late to rediscover one's passion and find the confidence to express it.



CHAT WITH MIC Episode 84: Mia Mahal

Photos courtesy of Mia Mahal and Lulu Nino



FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

COMMUNITY EVENTS • OCTOBER 2026

Celebrating Filipino American history, culture, community and creativity across Southern California

PEOPLE
HISTORY
CULTURE
COMMUNITY
CREATIVITY
OUR FUTURE



OCT
1
THU

- **FAHM Kickoff Mahjong** ⌚ 6:00 – 9:00 PM
📍 Café 86, Placentia | **ORANGE COUNTY**
- **Baryo Brunch + Bazaar** ⌚ 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
📍 Grand Central Market | **LOS ANGELES**
- **Kapwa Square Dedication**
📍 Panorama City | **SAN FERNANDO VALLEY** | @cd6losangeles

OCT
2
FRI

- **FilAm Creative Film Festival** ⌚ 10:00 AM
📍 Luckman Fine Arts Complex, Cal State LA | **LOS ANGELES**

OCT
3
SAT

- **FilAm Creative Film Festival** ⌚ 10:00 AM
📍 Luckman Fine Arts Complex, Cal State LA | **LOS ANGELES**
- **Fil-Am Festival**
📍 Santa Clarita | **SANTA CLARITA**
- **FAHM UbeFest (Oct 3–4)**
📍 Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts | **CERRITOS**
- **Baryo Bazaar x Grand Central Market** ⌚ 12:00 – 5:00 PM
📍 Grand Central Market | **LOS ANGELES**
- **Pinoy Poolooza**
📍 Wild Rivers Waterpark, Irvine | **ORANGE COUNTY**
- **ILLURA Grand Introduction: Technologies & Services**
⌚ 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM
📍 ILLURA Health & Wellness, 10328 Reseda Blvd. | **PORTER RANCH**
@illurahealthwellness

OCT
4
SUN

- **FilAm Creative Film Festival** ⌚ 10:00 AM
📍 Luckman Fine Arts Complex, Cal State LA | **LOS ANGELES**
- **Mayumi Market Annual Filipino Fest**
⌚ 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM
📍 Common Space Brewery | **HAWTHORNE** | @mayumi_market
- **Haven City Market** ⌚ 3:00 PM – 10:00 PM
📍 West Covina | **WEST COVINA**
- **Sunday Jump Open Mic** ⌚ 5:00 – 7:00 PM
📍 Pilipino Workers Center | **HISTORIC FILIPINOTOWN** | @sundayjump
- **PMASD Carabao 5K Run**
- **SIPA Giving Greens Golf Tournament**
📍 Historic Filipinotown | @sipacares
- **Almuchow Pares Nights Begin**
Mon–Thu | 6:00 – 9:00 PM
📍 1559 E Amar Rd | **WEST COVINA**

OCT
5
MON

- **Meet LA28 in HiFi**
Friday, Oct 9 | 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM
SIPA | 3200 W. Temple St., Suite 100
Historic Filipinotown | Free and open to all
Hosted by Historic Filipinotown and Project Pamana
RSVP: bit.ly/HiFiLA28

OCT
9
FRI

- **Meet LA28 in HiFi**
Friday, Oct 9 | 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM
SIPA | 3200 W. Temple St., Suite 100
Historic Filipinotown | Free and open to all
Hosted by Historic Filipinotown and Project Pamana
RSVP: bit.ly/HiFiLA28

OCT
10
SAT

- **FAHM/Halloween Hangout + Mini Mahjong** ⌚ 6:00 – 9:00 PM
📍 Malaya, Arcadia | **ARCADIA (LOS ANGELES COUNTY)**
- **A Concert for Mindanao**
📍 Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts | **CERRITOS**
- **Baryo Bazaar x Grand Central Market** ⌚ 12:00 – 5:00 PM
📍 Grand Central Market | **LOS ANGELES**
- **Bass Building featuring Bambu & Friends**
📍 The Ford | **LOS ANGELES**
- **FAPCCA Legacy & Media Awards Dinner Gala**
📍 Sheraton Cerritos | **CERRITOS**
- **Remote Control Crawl & Trail Challenge**
📍 Eagle Rock Plaza | **EAGLE ROCK** | @projectpamana

OCT
11
SUN

- **Filled Market**
📍 Smorgasburg at ROW DTLA | **LOS ANGELES** | @filledmarket
- **Tikim at Tiles: Mahjong Day**
📍 Almuchow | **WEST COVINA**

OCT
16
FRI

- **LAFACE Filipino American History Month Recognition**
10:00 AM Presentation | 11:30 AM Reception
LA City Hall, John Ferraro Council Chamber | **LOS ANGELES**
Honoree: Dr. Fatima Bustos-Choy | RSVP: bit.ly/4A68T2
- **FilAm Fiesta 5:00–9:00 PM** | Anaheim Packing District | **ORANGE COUNTY**
- **City Hall FAHM Lighting** 6:00 PM | Los Angeles City Hall

OCT
17
SAT

- **Baryo Bazaar x Grand Central Market** ⌚ 12:00 – 5:00 PM
📍 Grand Central Market | **LOS ANGELES**
- **Long Beach FAHM Celebration**
📍 Long Beach Civic Center Plaza | **LONG BEACH**
- **Pistahan sa Almuchow**
📍 Almuchow | **WEST COVINA**

OCT
18
SUN

- **Kultura Pilipino Day**
📍 Disneyland | **ORANGE COUNTY** | @dkababayan
- **2nd Annual Filipino American Fiesta**
📍 Museum of Ventura County | **VENTURA**

OCT
21

- **Filipino American History Month Celebration**
Irvine Valley College | **IRVINE**
- **Filipino Mic Drop: Voter Registration Effort**
⌚ Doors Open 8:00 – 11:00 PM
📍 Mic Drop Karaoke | **WEST HOLLYWOOD**
Karaoke Competition • Open Mic • Dancing | 21+ | RSVP Required

OCT
22–24

- **FilAm FunFest**
OC FilAm Comedian Shows | **ORANGE COUNTY**

OCT
23
FRI

- **Katipunan Poetry Slam**
📍 Historic Filipinotown | @sundayjump
- **SoCal Filipinos Plaza Meetup** ⌚ 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM
📍 Plaza West Covina | **WEST COVINA**

OCT
24
SAT

- **Baryo Bazaar x Grand Central Market** ⌚ 12:00 – 5:00 PM
📍 Grand Central Market | **LOS ANGELES**
- **Carson FAHM Celebration** | Community Center | **CARSON**
- **Qarry Itlong Day Festival** ⌚ 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
📍 Pilipino Workers Center | **HISTORIC FILIPINOTOWN** | @pwcs
- **FAHM Brunch (Oct 24–25)** ⌚ 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
📍 Manila Inasal | **HISTORIC FILIPINOTOWN** | @socalfilipinos

OCT
25
SUN

- **ManilaSound: Daytime Disco**
📍 Historic Filipinotown | @manilasound.la
- **FAHM & Howl O Ween** 📍 Café 86 | **WEST COVINA**
- **Piece of Philippines: Filipinos in Hollywood**
📍 Hollywood | @pieceofphilippines
- **1st Creative Book Writing Certification Workshop & WAC's Book Turnover Ceremony** ⌚ 2:00 PM
📍 Glendale Recreation Center (ARC), Dinner Hall | **GLENDALE**

OCT
26
MON

- **Filipino American History Month Celebration** ⌚ 12:00 – 6:00 PM
📍 Café 86 | **WEST COVINA**

OCT 27

- **Kuya Lord x Kasama Kamayan**

OCT 29

- **Mahjong Lumpia Collab** ⌚ 6:00 – 9:00 PM 📍 Green Cheek | **ORANGE COUNTY**

OCT 31

- **Mabuhay CU FAHM Poster Making Contest** 📍 MCU | **CARSON**



IN THE MIX

A COMMUNITY CALENDAR BY
MIC DIAZ PRESENTS



Know of a Filipino American History Month event we should add?
Send your event information to Mic Diaz Presents.

CREATOR SPOTLIGHT | SPECIAL TRIBUTE

Remembering Rey Zipagan

Honoring the life, artistry, and legacy of a Filipino visual artist whose powerful works gave voice to history, identity, and the Filipino experience.

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER



Photos by Mic Diaz

Filipino-American visual artist **Rey Zipagan** leaves behind a body of work that reflects his passion for history, culture and the Filipino experience. Through his paintings, Zipagan explored stories of struggle, resilience and identity, bringing attention to historical events and communities whose contributions have often been overlooked. His passing on October 5, 2026, is a loss to the arts community and to those who found meaning in the stories he told through his work.

Zipagan's paintings went beyond artistic expression. They encouraged viewers to revisit history and consider the experiences of Filipinos across generations. His subjects included the Philippine-American War, the Balangiga Massacre and the struggles of Filipino

workers in the United States. Through these historical themes, he connected the past with questions of identity, justice and cultural memory that remain relevant today.

Among the subjects he explored was the Philippine-American War, a chapter of history that is not always widely discussed in American classrooms. His work brought attention to the experiences of Filipinos during the conflict and the lasting consequences of colonialism. By interpreting these events through art, Zipagan invited audiences to engage with history beyond what they may have learned in textbooks.

He also explored the Balangiga Massacre and the history of Filipino labor in America. His painting *Welga*, associated

Remembering Rey Zipagan (Continued from Page 8)

with the struggles of Filipino farmworkers and the Delano Grape Strike, reflected the importance of recognizing Filipino contributions to the American labor movement. These works served as visual reminders of the sacrifices and collective efforts that helped shape Filipino and Filipino-American history.

I first learned about Zipagan's work approximately three years ago, and it left a lasting impression on me. His paintings were not simply images to admire; they encouraged conversations about history, heritage and the importance of remembering. I later had the opportunity to meet him and get to know him personally, as well as meet his sons, who are members of the local band ZIPCODE.

During one of our last conversations, we discussed the possibility of having him as a guest on *Chat With Mic*. I had hoped to sit down with him for an interview and learn more about the experiences and historical research behind his paintings. Unfortunately, that conversation never took place, making his passing particularly poignant.

What made Zipagan's work meaningful was his ability to transform historical subjects into compelling visual narratives. He used his artistic voice to bring attention to stories that deserve to be seen, discussed and preserved. For younger generations of Filipino-Americans, his paintings offer an opportunity to discover parts of their heritage and better understand the experiences of those who came before them.

As we remember Rey Zipagan, we also celebrate the legacy he leaves through his art. His paintings will continue to encourage conversations about Filipino history, identity and the importance of cultural preservation. His work reminds us that art can do more than capture a moment—it can help ensure that important stories are never forgotten.

Rest in peace, Rey Zipagan. Thank you for the stories you shared through your art.





"First Single Release"

Caren Mempin

LApoprockDiva International

MH★G Product

OCTOBER 9, 2026

NOYPITZ
LONG BEACH, CA

\$50 TICKET
(310) 227-5238 (562) 964-0870
Gerna • Haidee

Hosted by Mic Diaz

Ivy & ferdie
JC-company

Malou Toler
LArockstarDiva

Full gate open
7pm start

Winner of

INTERNATIONAL 3ilicon
EXPRESS EXCELLENCE

Kevin Hermogenes
Discovery Philippines
winner

Janice Javier the
voice
Philippines finalist

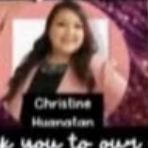
Philippine jukebox queen
Precious Cejo

Singing Nurse
Michael Luke

Actor/Host
Christian Ylagan

Imelda Bosing
Rockstar Diva

Thank you to our sponsors




Thank you to our sponsors
















FILIPINO FOOD • GOOD COMPANY • WEST COVINA

PISTAHAN

sa ALMUCHOW

ATBP.

A FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH SPECIAL

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17
6 PM - 11 PM

 CULTURAL PERFORMANCES

 LIVE MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT
(acoustic + more!)

 VENDORS & SHOPPING

 RAFFLES

Good Food
Great People
Stronger
Community
♥

ALL YOU CAN EAT FILIPINO STREET FOOD

WE'RE LOOKING FOR PARTICIPANTS!

CULTURAL PERFORMERS • OPEN MIC PARTICIPANTS • NON-FOOD VENDORS

Interested in performing, joining the Open Mic, or becoming a vendor?
Contact Mic at (213) 677-9768 for details.

RED OCTO BER

FUNDRAISER & RAFFLE PRIZES



24

SATURDAY 6PM ONWARDS

**Let's
party!**

WITH
DJ

Edge



PUT ON YOUR
DANCING SHOES
WITH SPECIAL GUEST

**MS. DIANE
"DIDI"
CANEDA**
BELLY DANCER



ATTIRE: SMART CASUAL

**PLUS
FOOD & DRINKS
RAFFLE TICKETS**

\$60

STARTS AT 6PM



FOR PAYMENTS &
RESERVATION
PLEASE SCAN
ZELLE QR CODE

sanbeda.org

VENUE:



250 S. GLENDALE AVE
GLENDALE, CA 91205

FOR INQUIRY: PLEASE DM
MR. NOEL PASCUAL @ 818.795.5647
MR. ARTHUR DELA ROSA @ 626.782.1690