

# For the Youth: Pursuing Sustainability in Filipino Indie Filmmaking

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The digital revolution has paved the way for contemporary Filipino independent filmmaking. As active participant-learners, the youth are very much a part of this “revolution.” This article presents a snapshot of the Filipino independent filmmaking landscape in the 2000s and asserts the need for sustainability that enables indie filmmakers to continue making films and evolving as artists.

The year 2000 started with the fear that Philippine cinema is dead. The source of this anxiety was the decline in output of Filipino films made during the early part of the 2000s compared with that of the 1990s. The advent of film piracy in the 2000s hurt the mainstream film industry, which at the time still largely accounted for country’s film production. Not too many were watching Filipino films in theaters because, especially for the mass audience targeted by mainstream films, it did make economic sense to just buy a pirated VCD or DVD at half to a quarter of the cost of the cinema ticket.

In the early 2000s, mainstream film outfits that still accounted for much of the country’s output of feature films managed their financial risk by minimizing the number of films they produced per year. The films became more conservative not just in number but also in quality; much of the films they released were the “tried-and-tested” genre films the mainstream producers assumed would appeal to the masses.

Then the digital revolution arrived. The intense competition among manufacturers significantly lowered the prices of the video cameras used in independent digital film production. These video cameras—usually small and lightweight—became very versatile and innovative in the challenging adventure of “guerilla filmmaking.” Postproduction became cheaper too, as many digital filmmakers started editing the video in their own laptops or desktop computers.

With the digital revolution came the piracy of digital media. Pirated DVDs of foreign independent films, world cinema classics, and award-winning works outside Hollywood became readily available to local film buffs and budding independent filmmakers. Screenwriting workshops became increasingly popular, particularly those conducted by Ricky Lee, Jose Javier Reyes, and Armando “Bing” Lao. The 2000s saw the blossoming of talented screenwriters taking the challenge of telling new stories within the new aesthetics of the emerging independent cinema.

More and more young and promising independent filmmakers emerged, all hungry to learn the art and craft of filmmaking, so that they can tell their stories and make statements about the human condition. In 2002, the University of the Philippines Film Institute (UPFI), in addition to its Bachelor of Arts degree program in Film (existing since 1984), offered the Master of Arts in Media Studies (Film) program, the first and, to date, the Philippines’ only graduate program in Film. In 2007, the De La Salle-College of St. Benilde instituted the Bachelor of Arts in Digital Filmmaking program, in addition to its Bachelor of Arts in Multimedia Arts (Video Track) program.

Institutions that offer certificate courses in filmmaking were also formed during the decade. The Asia Pacific Film Institute (APFI) (established in 2001), International Academy of Film and Television (IAFT) (established in 2004), and the Marilou Diaz-Abaya Film Institute (MDAFI) (established in 2007), among others, have trained a number of Filipino filmmakers.

Filmmaking workshops such as those from the Mowelfund Film Institute, UP Film Institute, UFO Workshops, filmmaker Cris Pablo’s “Sinehang Digitales” workshops, and Lao’s filmmaking workshops have also been very instrumental in the training of many independent filmmakers. Some up-and-coming indie filmmakers also train abroad, in the Berlinale Talent Campus and the Asian Film Academy Fellowship Program, among others.

The context of the independent filmmaking of the 2000s facilitated young people to be filmmakers themselves. Before this era, the youth were mostly just spectators, and if they wanted to be filmmakers, they had to spend years of apprenticeship in mainstream film outfits before they could hold key positions in production. But now, there are indie film directors, cinematographers,

production designers, editors, and sound designers who are teenagers or are in their 20s. Jed Medrano (in her early 20s), associate producer of the full-length digital film *Laruang Lalaki* (2010) and line producer of Cinemalaya feature film finalist *Magkakapatid* (2010), states:

The youth plays a big part of the ongoing indie revolution since most of the new directors are young. In the 1990s, most teenagers wanted to form a band, but now they want to make films and be famous directors. The Filipino youth is in a good position to explore the technology of its capabilities and as well as its limitations. We should aim to push further the existing standards and create new forms in support of our new voices. (Medrano, personal communication, July 10, 2011)

Cyril Bautista, one of the most sought-after student editors at the UPFI, whose works include thesis films such as *Kasamyento* (2011), *Kuwerdas* (2011), *Ang Umaatikabong Buhay ni Badong Aguirre* (2010), further describes the relationship between the youth and Filipino independent filmmaking in the 2000s:

We are the ones for which these films are made, I suppose. For we are the ones who still have that chance to grow, so very drastically grow. We can be changed. We have that freedom. There is a generation of the youth that, thankfully, is very much interested in deeper cinema. These are the people who frequent screenings, frequent the Cinemalaya, and other festivals. Give them a camera, and they will make films. Let them age with that camera and they will make great films. It's really up to them. We should instill in them that passion, and that is the current independent scene's job. (personal communication, July 11, 2011)

Many young filmmakers make digital short films for uploading to YouTube and other social media sites (Figure 1), while others start to gain production experience by joining independent ("indie") filmmakers in their full-length digital film projects. Many of those who follow this track start off as production assistants, assistant directors, actors, online publicity/marketing assistants, and apprentices to the director of photography, production designer, or editor. Inspired by the "indie spirit," these young filmmakers quickly take on larger roles in their succeeding projects.

Also, many of today's youth embark on writing about film via their blogs. Some of the more notable are that of Francis "Oggs" Cruz's *Lessons from the*



SOMETIMES, LOVE IS BLIND.  
SO TAKE OFF THOSE ANTI-REFLECTIVE SUNGLASSES!

# LOVELESS

PEEJAY SARACHO PAOLO RAYCO ANGELO BANTA MOK ARDA JUNE VILLENA ADRIAN GONZALES

Figure 1. Poster of a digital short film by a young filmmaker, uploaded to Youtube and Facebook  
Source: Poster sent by Loveless director A. Gonzales sent via email

*School of Inattention: Oggs' Movie Thoughts* (<http://oggsmoggs.blogspot.com>), Adrian Mendizabal's *Auditoire: Exploring World Cinema Frame-by-frame* (<http://adrianmendizabal.blogspot.com/>), and the writings of the other members of the social media group *Cinephiles!*.

Some of these film buffs are filmmakers themselves, reflecting on their practice and the indie scene, while some are young writers analyzing indie films and the indie film phenomenon. These young cineastes pave the way for the new breed of serious scholarship on Philippine independent cinema in the 2000s. Twenty-two year-old film critic and *Cinephiles!* founder Mendizabal further describes the relationship between the Filipino youth and the contemporary Filipino indie filmmaking movement:

The core of Filipino indie filmmaking movement is the Filipino youth. The movement's ideologies and principles came from the voices of the youth itself: its exploratory mode, adventurous exuberance, idealism, individualistic tendencies, experimental sensibilities, rebellious qualities, its themes such as alienation, identity crisis, sexuality, coming-of-age, love and relationships, and others are all inspired by current youth culture that we have. I would love to describe it as a Cinema of the Liberal Youth. It is no wonder why most of our filmmakers today are in their 20s and early 30s. It is also due to the fact that the current artistic and cultural scene is composed mostly of liberal young people from other spheres. This liberal youth culture is re-examining itself with an intense reexamination of the current spirit of the time with fresh eyes. (personal communication, July 10, 2011)

Many institutions have already recognized that a way to empower artistic expression of the youth is to help them with the skills and techniques to tell their stories and to provide more venues for them to showcase their films. The Gawad CCP Para sa Alternatibong Pelikula at Video, the longest-running indie film festival and competition in Asia, continues to exhibit short films by young filmmakers in the 2000s. In its 22nd year, it showcased a staggering 162 of the best digital short films of 2010, made predominantly by young filmmakers: 54 percent were narrative short feature films, 19 percent animation shorts, 17 percent experimental shorts, and 10 percent documentary shorts.

Other institutions such as Cinemania (Ishmael Bernal Award for Young Cinema), Cinemalaya (short film category in the annual festival), UPFI (year-round opportunities in screening short films by students and other young filmmakers, including its Likha Adarna, International Women's Film Festival,

and the Cine Veritas Film Festival), Pandayang Lino Brocka Political Film and New Media Festival, and the Titus Brandsma Pinoy Short Indie Film Festival feature works by young Filipino filmmakers.

The youth themselves, through their student organizations, also organize digital short film festivals such as UP Cinema's annual Piling Obrang Vidyo (POV), an interschool short video competition.

## **Filipino Independent Filmmaking in the 2000s**

A digital film starts with an idea. A person comes up with a concept for a digital film. This person can be the scriptwriter, director, producer, writer-director-producer, or any combination of the first three. He, she, or they will have to raise the funds to make the film.

Prospective sources of funds are: a) personal, i.e., self or family; b) private individual investors or private entities such as ABS-CBN's Cinema One Originals or PLDT's Cinemabuhay; c) government grants such as those from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) or Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP); d) nongovernment organizations (NGOs), international nongovernment organizations (INGOs), or foreign embassies; and e) hybrids such as Cinemalaya, which is funded by a private businessman, Antonio "Tony Boy" Cojuangco, and supported by the government via the venue resources of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP). The indie filmmakers will have to pitch their concepts or present their sequence treatments or screenplays to the funding source or sources and convince them that their film is worth doing.

When the filmmakers get enough funding for their full-length digital film either from a single source (e.g., PhP500,000 grant from Cinemalaya or PhP1 million from Cinemabuhay) or pooled from various sources, they can proceed to the other aspect of preproduction: casting (calls usually done in indie film e-groups—Figure 2); identifying the crew (particularly the director, cinematographer, production designer, production manager, and editor); location hunting; budget planning, and setting the shooting schedule (Figure 3).

The shooting then happens. For many young people involved in the entire process, this is a great adventure. They go to different places, meet diverse people, and face the challenges of production.

In editing, many young people are also involved; in fact, many indie film editors today are the tech-savvy youth. For the youthful observers, this is also a chance to learn from the director, to be involved in choosing and sequencing the shots to finish the movie.

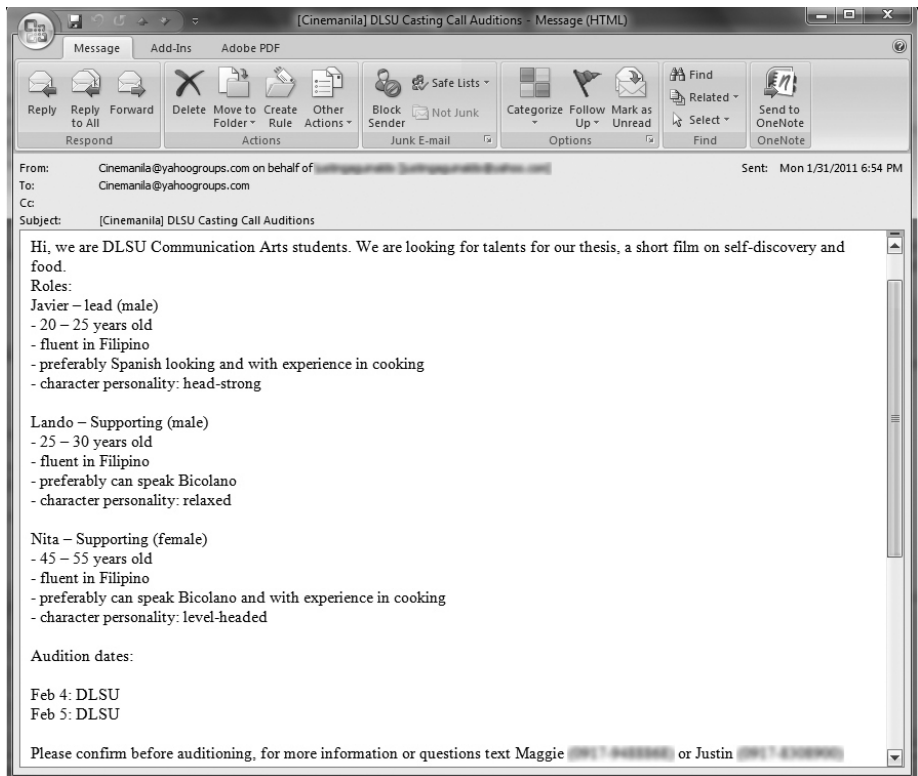


Figure 2. Sample casting call: From De La Salle University Communication Arts students  
 Source: Message sent by J. Aguinaldo, DLSU casting call auditions publicity representative, to [Cinemanila@yahoo.com](mailto:Cinemanila@yahoo.com) on January 31, 2011

The young members of the indie team flourish in the publicity phase of independent filmmaking. Here, they use their creativity and savvy in Internet video and social media marketing. The members of the publicity team upload the trailer to YouTube and conduct an announcement blast in e-groups such as the following “@yahoogroups” communities: [Pinoyindiecinema](#), [ThePhilippineCinema](#), [upfilminstitute](#), [Cinemanila](#), [Cinemataya\\_Philippines](#), [NCCA\\_Artists\\_Forums](#), [pelikula\\_titusbrandsma](#), and [eCulturalCenter](#). The indie team also uploads the trailer, poster, and other media in the digital film’s Facebook event page. In these social media sites, they interact with the prospective audience for their premiere screening.

Commonly, there are two ways to premiere independent films. The first is through film festivals—for example, a premiere at the CCP digital theaters via the Cinemataya Film Festival—or a premiere in a rented commercial theater

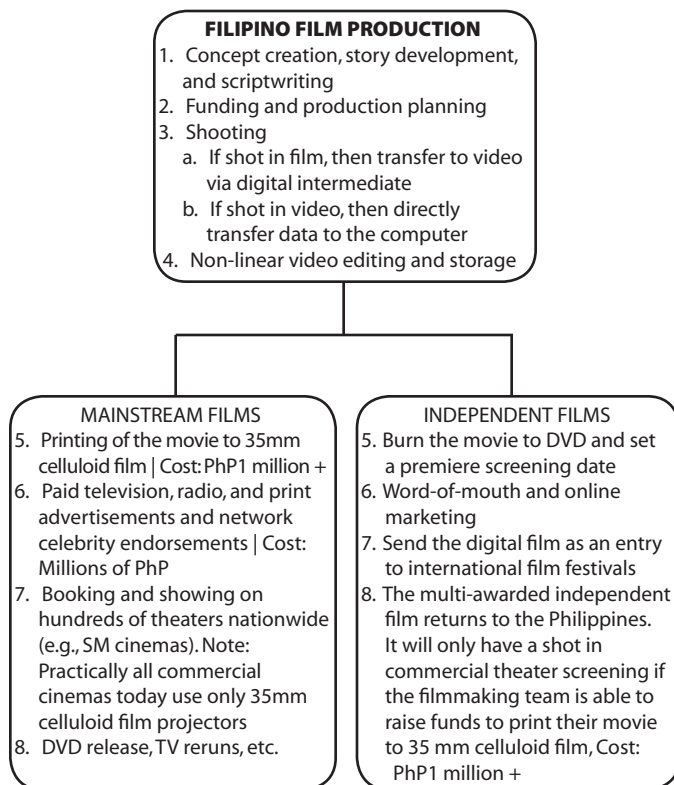


Figure 3. Typical film production workflow

provided by rented digital film projectors via the Cinemania International Film Festival. The indie film can also premiere at the Cine Adarna of the UPFI Film Center where the indie filmmakers can project their movies to the big screen from DVD or hard drive.

Many independent filmmakers celebrate and uphold the indie filmmaking revolution of the 2000s. Auraeus Solito, the director of *Busong* (2011), *Boy* (2009), *Pisay* (2007), and *Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros* (2005), declares:

In the history of Philippine Cinema, no other time has our films been recognized and winning international awards as much as the 2000s. When I attend film festivals, international programmers and filmmakers always tell me, when they find out that I'm Filipino, there is new wave in the Philippines! (personal communication, July 10, 2011)



Chuck Gutierrez, the producer and editor of *Busong* (2011), *Halaw* (2010), and *Sampaguita* (2010), and the editor of *Jay* (2008), avows:

Technology paves the way for any filmmaker who has a story to make one anytime. Plus, with unlimited venues where one filmmaker can show his work in the Philippines, the world and the internet, it is now very simple to create and share films to your audience. This whole system revolutionizes how we make films and distribute it. (personal communication, July 12, 2011)

Christopher Gozum, the director of *Anacbanua [Child of the Sun]* (2009) which won the Lino Brocka Grand Prize at the 11<sup>th</sup> Cinemania International Film Festival, states that another indicator that there is indeed an indie revolution in Philippine cinema of the 2000s is “films produced and made outside of the center, that is Metro Manila, specifically those made by filmmakers from the provinces or other Philippine ethnic communities are being seen and recognized by a national and even by an international audience” (personal communication, July, 11, 2011). Adrian Alarilla, the director of *Pag-uusap + Pagmumuni-muni / Conversations + Musings* (2010), adds, “Regional filmmaking is slowly gaining ground once more. If this is not considered a revolution, I don’t know what is” (personal communication, July 10, 2011).

Another indicator of the revolution is the emergence of a new aesthetic in Filipino National Cinema as projected in international film festivals and, reflexively, back to Filipino filmmaking practice and spectatorship. Anna Abalain, assistant director of *Biyaheng Lupa* (2009) and *The Forgotten War* (2009) and the director of *Vidin (Habilin)* (2010) and *Singko* (2007), notes, “There’s also a new trend of scriptwriting form and style introduced and promoted by Armando Lao known as the Found Story, whose works and that of his students have figured in both local and international film festivals.” (personal communication, July 10, 2011).

These emergent modes in narrative style (e.g., real-time) inspire innovations in new expressions in Filipino cinematic language and techniques. This fresh formulation of Filipino National Cinema propels Filipino independent filmmakers to the international film festival experience. Gutierrez relates:

Participating in international festivals is the ultimate eye opener for Filipino filmmakers. Based on personal experience, attending festivals teaches me the current trends in the craft and at the same time, gauge Filipino cinema with the best of the world. The experience inspires me

to discover new techniques on how to further develop my craft and communicate my story better through cinema. (personal communication, July 12, 2011)

Experimental filmmaker Jon Lazam, the director of *Tagpuan* (2010), adds, “International film festivals are opportunities for independent videomakers to learn and be recognized” (personal communication, July 10, 2011). Indeed, the opening up of the Filipino filmmaker revolutionizes Filipino National Cinema, and eventually develops the local cinema audience. Solito expounds:

The recognition of international film festivals validates the universality of our themes, the artistry of our filmmakers and at the same time the uniqueness of our many existing cultures. Our films get respect from other countries that have elevated cinema as an art form. An advantage would be that it sparks curiosity from the local audience on why a film has won a prize or recognized in an international film festival. But for me the final validation is when the local audience appreciates the films and see themselves. (personal communication, July 10, 2011)

### **Prospects for a ‘Third Golden Age of Philippine Cinema’**

By the sheer number of films made per year in the 2000s, and the “independent spirit” that facilitates artistic freedom, some treasures have been distilled from the pool of Filipino films. It’s a numbers game. Assuming that 10 percent are excellent works that express the artistic visions of the auteurs that made them and emotionally and intellectually connect to—and not alienate—the audience, Philippine cinema has a good number of films that should not only be seen in international film festivals but, more importantly, by the Filipino audience. This is the independent filmmakers’ golden opportunity to change society for the better, consistent with the great Brocka’s vision of an artist as citizen.

Why is this not exactly happening right now? The reason is clear: The good films are out there, but they do not have an impact in Philippine society just yet because only a very small percent of the general population see them.

Very few Filipinos see independent films not because they are indifferent to them; instead, it is because it is quite rare for a typical independent film to be screened in commercial theaters such as SM Cinemas (Figure 4). Most of the films accommodated in more than 100 commercial theaters nationwide are in 35mm celluloid film format, as practically all commercial cinemas have these 35mm celluloid film projectors as the existing equipment. Today, there are still very few cinemas that have digital projectors as the existing equipment.

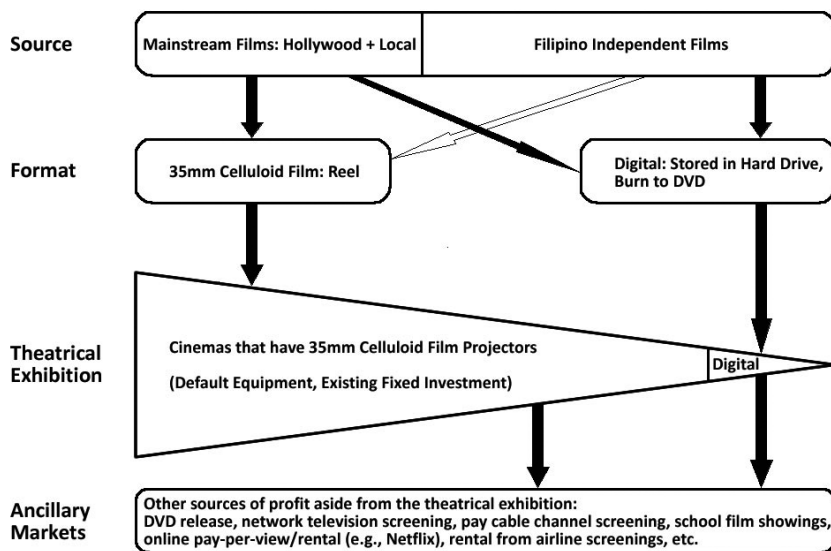


Figure 4. Philippine cinema economic landscape: Mainstream vis-à-vis independent films

Even with existing commercial digital cinemas, it does not mean that these will necessarily be reserved for digital independent Filipino films. Hollywood mainstream films not only provide 35mm celluloid film reels, but also digital media, especially for the 3D versions of their movies. Commercial theaters such as SM Cinemas are bound to market forces. It will be unnatural, even wrong—in a free market capitalist system—to force them to program indie films in their digital cinemas if it does not make good business sense to do so, as mainstream films have more money for publicity and marketing, compared with most independent films.

The apparent solution is to just print the digital film to 35mm celluloid film to have a greater shot at a commercial release, but there's one problem: It costs more than a million pesos. For an independent film that cost PhP500,000 to make, looking for an additional PhP1 million is next to impossible. And even if they come up with more than a million pesos to print the movie to 35mm celluloid film, it does not necessarily mean that the commercial theaters will book them in their cinemas, as they will have to be convinced that the movie will indeed sell.

Because the commercial theater's profit will depend on ticket sales, the booking agent for the cinema will have to be certain that the film is saleable enough to produce very good word of mouth and/or the filmmakers will have enough money for publicity and advertising. This is indeed another problem

for a film that cost PhP500,000 to make but not a problem for the mainstream film that had a significantly larger budget for production and publicity via paid television, radio, and print advertisements and network celebrity endorsements.

Indeed, there is a bottleneck in Philippine independent cinema; there are so many good indie films out there, but only a few are seen by the general population. This small percentage of the general population who are able to see indie films belong to the very small circles: the indie filmmakers themselves, their friends and family, film critics, film buffs, academicians, and their students.

It is argued that the Philippines is approaching the “Third Golden Age of Philippine Cinema,” after the “Second Golden Age” in the 1970s (as exemplified by the works of Lino Brocka, Ishmael Bernal, Mike De Leon) and the “First Golden Age” in the 1950s studio era. Solito (personal communication, July 10, 2011) asserts, “We are on the verge of a Golden Age. I believe that we are only beginning to explore the myriad artistic expressions and visions through the democratization of the cinematic medium through digital technology. There are greater things to come.” For Gozum:

The technology, the manpower or creative talent, the financial resources, and the public dissemination/distribution networks are now within reach for the young independent Pinoy filmmaker. These are the signs. What makes this so-called third golden age distinct from the other glory days of Philippine cinema is the fact that production and narratives are no longer concentrated on the imperial center of Philippine culture that is Metro Manila. (personal communication, July, 11, 2011)

Indeed, there is a renaissance in terms of: a) the number of films made that explores new topics, many of which would have found it impossible to pass the filters—e.g., controversial, dark, too intelligent—of mainstream film outfits, and b) the international film festivals’ praise for Filipino films for their novelty in subject matters and styles.

But is this heightened film culture enough for us to consider to labeling our era the “Third Golden Age of Philippine cinema?” No.

Indeed, the indie filmmaking revolution has begun, for a great number of independent films out there have shown us the limitless possibilities of Filipino films—and this has even slowly but surely liberated some of the mainstream producers’ assumptions about the Filipino viewing public—but for a true “Third Golden Age of Philippine Cinema” to take place, a significant number of the general population’s hearts and minds should be implicated in the bigger picture.

This will only happen if the Filipino people will be able to see and appreciate the harvest of Filipino Independent Cinema. Mendizabal comments:

I hate using the term “THIRD GOLDEN AGE OF PHILIPPINE CINEMA” mainly because the title boxes the idea of what a revolution is. Whereas in what they call “Second Golden Age of Philippine Cinema” films have a pretty much public following, today’s revolution have only penetrated the underground art scene: a minority group, a small group of artists who strives to counteract hegemonic forces by disobeying to the conventional and commercial production codes. I would rather call the spirit of our time: AGE OF RESURGENCE, NEW PHILIPPINE CINEMA, THE COUNTER-CINEMA MOVEMENT of the 2000s. The title, Third Golden Age, enunciates a majority and a dominance in the public sphere as what happens in the 70s with Brocka, De Leon, whereas in today’s cinema the movement remains still within the underground sphere mainly because of its low economic value and media value in the social hierarchy. (personal communication, July 10, 2011)

How will the general population be able to watch Filipino indie films? Considering the landscape of Philippine cinema today, indie filmmakers should maximize the possibilities of ancillary markets, that is, other sources of profit aside from theatrical exhibition. Indie filmmakers are starting to do this via DVD release. In the 2000s, a chunk of our movie exhibition mode has significantly shifted from the theaters to home DVD players. Mainstream film outfits have utilized the DVD release of their films for additional profit aside from their theatrical exhibition, but for indie film outfits, it is quite different.

For many indie films, the DVD release is a significant potential source of income for a breakeven. Typically, an indie film would premiere at the UPFI Cine Adarna and/or have a short run in Robinsons Galleria’s Indie Sine or in smaller cinemas such as Remar, Gotesco, or Isetann’s Cinerama, and then release its original DVD, available in video stores such as Video City, Astrovision, Astroplus, or Odyssey.

Indie filmmakers should be resourceful and relentless in making their works available to the people. They should bring their films to the other major cities in the country. The FDCP, via the Sineng Pambansa (National Cinema) program that brings award-winning independent Filipino films to the provinces, has shown that Filipinos outside Manila are very much excited to see indie films. The FDCP has filled with very appreciative audiences—composed primarily by the youth—their rented commercial theaters in Iloilo, Zamboanga, and other places.

Independent filmmakers should also creatively, innovatively, and bravely explore other elements of the ancillary market, such as network television screening, pay cable channel screening, school film showings, online pay-per-view/rental (e.g., Netflix), rental from airline screenings.

Why do independent filmmakers need to have a return on investment (ROI) in making full-length films? The answer is simple: We need them to continue making films.

The common mode for indie filmmakers today is “first film, last film.” Quite typically, an indie filmmaking team would organize themselves and quite passionately make this indie film, despite all the hardships of fundraising and production. They will then have a premiere and then send their film to international film festivals. Then when the film returns to the Philippines with awards, it may have a DVD release.

But because almost always indie filmmakers do not have enough funding for publicity, they will never really profit much from their digital film, which, quite tragically, is their first and last. It is indeed tragic because the experience of the director, writer, cinematographer, production designer, production manager, and editor—the important lessons they have learned in the filmmaking process—will be put to waste. This is not good for Philippine cinema because this state is not sustainable. Documentary filmmaker Nawruz Paguidopon, the director of *As Told by the Butterflies* (2011) and *Rhose, Where Do Your Dreams Go?* (2008), notes:

As a practicing filmmaker, I like the idea of return on investment, but there is really no guarantee of a big market coming from independent films unlike the mainstream. A filmmaker's film maybe his/her first and last film, but as far as I am concerned, my next film project would always be better than what I have done before only if there is an opportunity to grab funds and acquire knowledge and skills on film production. (personal communication, July 11, 2011)

Indeed, indie filmmakers need to secure return on investment, so that they can continue making movies and evolve as artists. Indie filmmakers should think of sustainability at the onset. When they ask for funding for their indie film project, they should already include the allocation for “prints and advertising” in their budget proposals to facilitate the possibility for ROI in their current film project and enough financial momentum for their next film project. Indeed, artists need to survive. Even painters do not just paint for self-

expression; they also need to sell their works so that they can have money to buy a new canvass and their next can of paint.

For the “Third Golden Age of Philippine Cinema” to materialize in this new decade, independent filmmakers should survive. The sustainability of indie film outfits will mean that the experience they will have gained not just in production but also in publicity, marketing, exhibition, and distribution will be stronger, strong enough to translate to pushing indie filmmakers to come up with innovative and effective strategies in making their digital films available to the general population.

Aiming for an ROI is not wrong; in fact, it is the right thing to do, because indie filmmakers need to prove to their investors that indie filmmaking is not necessarily a losing endeavor. This will enable the indie film team to make more movies; this will enable more indie filmmakers to grow and excel more. This way, indie filmmakers, especially those who have already made at least one full-length film, will not have to rely on Cinemalaya or NCCA grants for them to be able to make their succeeding films.

Let these grants go to the younger and less experienced filmmakers, so that they will have a springboard to make their first digital indie films. The experienced indie filmmakers will creatively and resourcefully look for other sources of funding, not just because of their potential as filmmakers, but because of their track record in making films that express strong artistry but do not alienate the audience. This will enable indie filmmakers to pool more money and make more ambitious digital indie films with higher production values. This will further expand the horizons of indie filmmakers especially in terms of technique.

Many indie filmmakers have already come to terms with the idea that they need ROI, not necessarily for maximum profit as in the mainstream context but for sustainability, for the survival of their indie film outfits. When asked if he believes that independent filmmakers should also think of ROI, Solito answers:

Of course. I was lucky enough that my first fiction feature, *Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros*, was a local box office success and was released theatrically in the US, France, UK, and Singapore. This paved the way for making more films and eventually making my dream film which is *Busong*. (personal communication, July 10 2011)

Gozum adds:

Independent filmmakers need to sustain what they do. So thinking about the ROI of their projects is crucial. There is always a business side in independent cinema and filmmakers must be clever to search or device ways to generate money for their projects. (personal communication, July 11, 2011)

Finally, Abalahin notes:

I think that in any endeavor that entails some investment, it is but natural to think of its returns. However, it all boils down to the intention of the filmmaker on why he makes the film. Besides, a filmmaker can only be called such if he or she continuously makes films, and economic consideration is an important element in the whole process. And just like in any endeavor, survival is something basic, while sustainability is something practical as well as a test of endurance. (personal communication, July 10, 2011)

We have seen more and more independent films that are artistic and express strong auteuristic visions without alienating the audience, just like Solito's *Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros* (2005). Many indie filmmakers today do not completely disregard the audience anymore, for they now know that their films need the nod of the Filipino people—not just the praise of the international film festivals—for them to survive. This will enable the young filmmakers, as seeds planted in the first decade of the 2000s, to flourish and become the new and dynamic auteurs of the second decade of the 2000s, the decade that, we hope, will bear witness to the fruition of the “Third Golden Age of Philippine Cinema.”

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