

As the members know by now, Javi is a lawyer by profession, being a graduate of the UP College of Law. He is a partner at Flores Palarca and Ofrin Law Offices.

This is Javi's second Master Cup, having campaigned and won his first one as a probationary member. In between his two Master Cups, Javi has consistently done podium finishes: second in 2015, third in 2016, and second again last year. Javi is also the outgoing Viewfinder Editor-in-Chief.

1. When did you first start to do photography?

I took up the camera to document my first born's growing-up years. I think it was an Olympus point and shoot. Then I got another point and shoot, this time a Sony. Then on a whim I decided to buy a second hand DSLR, a D80. That was when I started asking myself questions like how could I use the equipment better. So I read up. When I moved up to the D7000 of Nikon, that was when I started taking lessons. I joined the workshop of Chasing Light, JiggieAlejandrino and Manny Librodo. But even then, I was just shooting what appeared in front me. The camera was still a means of documentation.

2. When did you get interested in

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photography as an art?

Not a lot of people will believe in this, but I started to think of photography as an art form only when I joined the Camera Club. It is true what they say that here in the club, you do not learn in the context of a classroom but by way of dialogues. I interviewed Bien Bautista once, I think someone was going to become a lifetime member and I was assigned to interview Bien so he could relate his experiences with the soon-to-be lifetime member.

At Bien's studio, I noticed his photos, and they took my breath away. Bien told me that those photos were examples of conceptual photography: when you translate your thoughts into photographs. I read up

on it, which is what I do a lot when I am starting out in any hobby. The more I read, the more I learned that conceptual photography was something that I was really partial to, or it was something that I was already doing. It was not that I didn't have any inkling that the camera



The Lucie and the UN:

In the City where the CCP didn't sleep!

The Lucie Awards is to Photography what the Oscars is to film.

The formats were the invariably the same. The Beautifully modern Zankel Hall in Carnegie was decked out just like The Oscars. The awardees were methodically introduced either by their fellow respected colleagues or by their former superiors or bosses. Some were Editors in Chief (of the New York Times or Vogue) or some other notable publishers, of news or magazine institutions. Introductions were efficiently followed by a review of their life's work in a timely manner. It was as if we were viewing the best images taken by each awardee and the most iconic of a generation as some awardees had a prolific 4 decades in their professional careers in photography. Some working to this day. A few exhibited familiar and memorable images that we all have seen before but never knew who took them. **But the photographers of these images were there, live and on stage and speaking about their images, their lives and their motivations which they all equally share to this day.** All of them had the same message and caution for the future due to the culture of division and segregation that predominates today's political climate. **One awardee even exclaimed that, now more than ever, photographers have to work ever so much harder to chronicle the world events and that the photographer's work is the raw and real editorial before it is even written.**

The program was well planned and organized with the unforgettable images of a generation shown on screen. But what made it even more memorable was the highlight of 25 of our beloved club members marching onstage to see and hear our Club President receive the inaugural **Spotlight Award** on our behalf. It will be an unforgettable image as we stood onstage looking into the crowded audience with spotlights glaring back at us. A glimpse of what it was like to be on stage in front of a crowd. A once in a lifetime treat and perspective. It felt like we each received the award.



Hussien Farmani.



Guests Shawn Yuson, Norman and Spencer Garden, Melissa and Mr. and Mrs Narcing dela Merced



Also met awardee nominee at Lucie Awards Photographer Marecar Olicia and Husband Dennis, FilCans from Vancouver, Canada



Woman with white hair is: Susan Baraz, head of Jury at IPA (International Photo Awards). At Lucie Awards Dinner.



The LU
AWA

Lucie Hall:

The 16th Annual Lucie Awards.
Friday, Oct. 28th 7pm.



While waiting in the lobby to enter the hall, a gentleman approached me to ask if we were the members of the CCP. After I said we were, he promptly introduced himself and told me he was just nominated to introduce us a few days ago. I asked if he needed any information about the Club and he said he had it under control. His name is **Carlos Esguerra** and he introduced us well. He captivated the audience by starting his introduction by asking how many in the audience was 90 years old. He knew how to build up our introduction. As I was seated in the back, I could see the seated audience turn their heads to see what or who he was referring to. And without any paper to read from (unlike most other speakers that night), he extemporaneously spoke a brief and accurate history of our club as if he knew it by heart. Later I told him how impressive his introduction was and how he asked the seated audience to look around for the men in Barongs which was our Que. to start our walk onstage which we knew would consume valuable time. Impressed by his eloquence I asked if he was in broadcasting or the diplomatic core. He laughed and said he was just a FilAm photographer and native of NYC!

Just as impressive and captivating was **Hussien Farmani**. He opened the evening with the acknowledgment of photographers around the world who are either in detention or missing in action. A somber reality of our chosen hobby practiced by professional photojournalists in the field, performing a vital service to the world. Of course there were awards for glamor, celebrity, design and fashion but the coverage of so called "All Wars", past and present, disasters and calamities both by nature and man's own doing excelled. It was images chronicling the human spirit that took center stage. Though raw, real and sometimes sad, these were also the most artistic, inspiring awe and emotion. It felt good to be part of this ensemble, to simply be in the same room as these artists. Ours is a profession and an art with a mission. We met people whose lives were lived to fulfill that mission. And in that one evening, they were successful to feed not only our hearts but our minds and soul.



Next to Tilak: Edgardo and Ruby Fe Asuncion.

United Nations' Mission of the Philippines
29th October, 2018. 1800-2000hrs.
Conference Building, 1st FLR South Wall.

Amanikable's Alliance

Stakeholders Team to Sustain Philippine Oceans

Led by our **President PSP** who envisioned this exhibit, it was such an honor that we were able to inaugurate the opening of the UN exhibit with guests of honor **Consul General Claro Cristobal**, **Charges D'Affaires Ariel Penaranda** and our very own Lifetime Member **Narcing dela Merced** cutting the ribbon.

Day 0 started with CCP ending their midnight arrival to NYC at 430am in the city that never sleeps. Day 1 started with a bomb scare not far from the Cambria Hotel, home to CCP for almost the week which was, coincidentally, 100 meters from the Philippine Consulate. Our UN exhibit was being held at the height of the mail bomb scare. The CCP woke up to bomb disposal teams driving around with sirens blaring. Police cars were rushing to sites where supposed mail bombs were delivered and discovered, making square blocks closed to traffic just minutes away from our hotels. Security was tight everywhere. Our diplomatic corpse informed us of this heightened alert in the UN too. An ID mistake and mix-up has taught us earnestly: From now on, always register our full names (like in our IDs). One will never know if it may really matter. Anxious consular staff had to make corrections over the weekend (when UN Security and Safety Service wanted 48 hours notice) but things lightened up when the perpetrator of the mail bomb scare was apprehended a day before our exhibit opening!

After gathering general information from Filipino and FilAm veteran employees we met in this exhibit, we discovered there are over 3,000 employees in the UN NYC headquarters with around 700 of them of Filipino and that there are over 10,000 kababayans working in all of the UN around the world. Some Filipinos from the DFA who attended our exhibit just happened to be in the building that week for other official meetings.

We were surprised and almost overwhelmed by all the guests lining the exhibit corridors and realized that UN employees were exiting the building after another typical day of work.

Exhibits abound in the 3 main exhibit halls and 3 corridors that line the 3 inter-connected UN buildings but we could see our Filipino comrades employed here beaming with excitement and so happy to see our exhibit. As far as those we met are concerned, some of which have spent a lifelong career in the UN, they have never heard or every seen a wholly dedicated Philippine photo exhibit in the UN.

Thanks to **Felice Sta. Maria** for composing and directing the theme and literature from conception and to **PSP** again for working on intricate, final details of the exhibit dates and cocktail arrangements, making it happen back-to-back with The Lucie Awards Night. Thanks to ingress and egress teams **Raul Tanco** and **Raul Montifar**, **Pres. PSP**, **Patrick** and **Evelyn Uy**, **Narcing dela Merced** and family, including **Melissa**, **Tilak Hettige**, **Adel Samson** and **Rene Ner**.





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could be used as a tool for expressing one's ideas; it was that I had no name for it at the time.

3. Isn't conceptual photography that what photography is about in the first place?

Not exactly. A photograph for a lot of people fixes a moment in eternity, and they could be very adamant about that frozen-in-time concept, so much so that a mere retouching of a photograph may be seen as a blasphemy. Henri Cartier-Bresson says photography must seize upon a moment and hold immobile the equilibrium of it.

4. Are you saying that you are not a fan of the purists' view of photography?

I am all for this kind of photography, and truly I am a fan, but here is the thing: I do not have all the time in the world to create an entry that is borne by my imagination AND also corresponds to a scene that I may or may not readily find in my surroundings. I am not espousing a dichotomy. It is possible that you may find an idea in your head

translated by your environs, and your camera can seize upon that natural composition. But in my case, I need to set things up. How can I for example take a shot of a jeepney bedazzled with thousands of lights? There is nothing like that in nature. I wanted



to see that jeepney appearing to move at warp speed, but where will I find anything like that if I do not set it up?

5. How did you fare in the contests with conceptual photography?

I tried as best as I could to translate my ideas into photographs, and to some degree, it worked to my advantage because my photographs appeared different. I submitted photographs where my subjects were floating on air. One time when the

theme was infinity, I submitted a photo of glass floaters, lots of them, not floating on water, but floating on air, the way rocks may jut out of water, heading towards infinity. I incorporated my son in the picture appearing to step into the floating road. With a judge that did not like photoshop though, it bombed. It was at the bottom of the heap during the scoring. But no matter, I was happy with it.

6. You said that that photographed bombed, how about your other photographs?

The photographs that really worked with the judges were the long exposure light painting ones. I learned how to draw shapes with the use of light wands and I would use these shapes as backgrounds to silhouettes of models. I did that many times. That was new to the club and the judges. I also did a lot of double exposures DURING on-the-spot competitions, when it was still allowed. I work within the rules and I saw the rule that said that when the camera is capable of doing double exposures, you can use that during the OTS. So I maximized the use of the technique and for my first year, I was the OTS Photographer of the Year. Sadly, they banned double exposures in OTS after that. I really do not understand the reason why. If people feel threatened by it, they should learn it, instead of banning it. They are actually doing



themselves a disservice by banning double exposure.

7. Were you creative with your photography before you joined the Club? I only started shooting or creating photographs this way when I joined the Camera Club. You would not find any photograph of mine in the past where people were floating, where an armless guy would be drinking from a floating cup and then when you pay attention to his shadow, you notice that he has an arm and that is holding the cup up. I started doing all these things only because I felt that I was in the company of giants in the field, and I needed to be just a little more creative to be just at par. I was also exploring: How far can I go with this craft?
8. Did you already know how to use photoshop when you entered the club? I knew the rudiments. I was an associate editor of the college paper of the University of the

Philippines, the Philippine Collegian. I needed to learn photoshop to be able to crop and clip the photographs submitted to us. But I never really used it to do conceptual photography until I joined the Club. What is funny though is that I never took up photography in

college, despite my proximity to photographers. It was an intimidating craft at the time. There was just too much mathematics involved.

9. It appears that a lot of the changes in your photography happened when you joined the club, how do you feel about that? I really owe the club a lot.



You would not be able to believe how much I owe it. This competition that we have compels us to reveal a little bit of ourselves every time. And just to be able to stand shoulder to shoulder with the masters of the

club and of the craft, I am compelled to learn. In the five years that I have been in the club, I feel that I have earned a degree of sorts in photography. What is the difference in your craft since your first Master Cup win?

I feel that I am less pressured now. I have also learned to listen to the advice of my friends. There was a time probably when I believed in my own counsel, but in a competition, you need a third party to validate your thoughts about photography. That way I can also spread the blame, haha. Someone told me that I should really not be aiming to win, that I should be competing with myself. In this kind of mindset, I am just aiming to come up with an average of 3.5 per photograph, and not really aiming to win. The competition is

stretched out over a year so consistency of getting 3.5 per photograph is key. Don't beat yourself up coming with a higher score.

11. Moving forward, how do you see yourself? I'll be taking a break next year. That's the only definite thing I have for now. I would also be taking on a lot of workshops, as many as I can join.

