

Manlilikha ng Bayan

NATIONAL LIVING TREASURES. *Singled out in a nation-wide continuing search, indigenous exponents of traditions in the field of craft and performance are declared national icons to emulate as guardians who safeguard national cultural heritage. Thus far, the following National Living Treasures have been awarded the title of “Manlilikha ng Bayan” (one who creates for the country) in the field of traditional craft:*



Mat Weaver. Sama, Tandubas municipality, Tawi-Tawi archipelagic province, southern Philippines.

HAJA AMINA APRI already comes from a people famous for the weaving of pandanus mats into works of art. With a face exuding serenity, her hands are thick and dye-stained from a lifetime of harvesting pandanus and the drawing out of dream-like designs in her mats. For her, the most difficult part of her craft is culling from ethnic memory the visualization and execution of design. It is high precision work, requiring the mastery of the medium and an instinctive sense of proportion and symmetry, even asymmetry. Proclaimed in 2004 for mat weaving, she was respected and recognized for her artistry even in her own community of weavers. There was gentleness in her teaching of others. And quietly, she passed away in 2013.



Textile Weaver, T'boli, Lake Sebu municipality, South Cotabato province, Mindanao island, southern Philippines. Abaca fiber from the plant, *Musa textilis*, woven into cloth is a characteristic craft of only a few ethnic groups in southern Mindanao island. The tie-dye design technique is employed in creating mirror-image panel patterns. Proclaimed in 1998 for weaving the abaca ikat cloth called *t'nalak* by the T'boli, **LANG DULAY** produces creations that remain faithful to the T'boli tradition as manifested in the complexity of her designs reflecting the workings of ethnic memory, quality of workmanship and excellence of finish. The complex demands of the tie-dye technique in weaving designs require from her an instinctive mathematical mind.



Textile Weaver. Ilocano, Pinili municipality, Ilocos Norte province, northern Luzon island, northern Philippines. A wisp of frailty, the range of textile designs that **MAGDALENA GAMAYO** crafts from her frame loom and the incomparable finesse of her weaves do not show the tenacity of her mind in bringing to the contemporary world the heritage to which she has dedicated her life. She was proclaimed in 2012 for textile weaving. Presently living a lonely life among distant relatives where even her loom could not even be accommodated in her part of the house, her dedicated persistence in the craft has produced an unequaled body of work with designs that have dwindled into the past, with the color patterns of her people that have long faded in other weavers' memories.



Tabungaw Casque Maker. Ilocano, San Quintin municipality, Abra province, northern Luzon island, northern Philippines. An ingrained farmer, **TEOFILO GARCIA** cultivates corn, vegetables, rice and tobacco, husbands cattle and is a silviculturalist. On his freer months, he plants *upo*, the gourds of which he transforms into a casque which sprung from an ancient legacy. He was proclaimed in 2012 for carrying on the dying traditional craft of making *tabungaw*, which are conical helmets from gourd halves. Weaving its decorative rim and inner head lining using rattan strips requires consummate skill. He has established a specialized training program on raising *upo* and making *tabungaw* linked with the national educational system to usher this unique craft to posterity.



Metalsmith, Kapampangan, Apalit municipality, Pampanga province, central Luzon island, northern Philippines. Like most consummate craftsmen, **EDUARDO MUTUC** quietly works in a field limited to a very few – ornate metal crafting mainly dedicated to the needs of churches, filtering minimally to domestic needs. He was proclaimed in 2004 as a metalsmith. Using tools that he made himself (even a damper out of a discarded rubber slipper), he hammers from the back of sheets of silver and other metal to produce elaborate ornamental designs in repousse to beautify church altars, carrying out a tradition that is dying in the face of the encroachment of modern architecture and design.



Textile Weaver. Tausug, Parang municipality, Sulu archipelagic province, southern Philippines. The *pis* headcloth is a social marker where the position of a member is indicated by the way the cloth is wrapped about the head and the color and richness of the woven design. The Tausug headcloth is the most distinctive of these headwear. Proclaimed in 2004 for weaving the *pis syabit*, **DARHATA SAWABI** not only used the discontinuous weft weave on a tapestry loom, but the particularly intricate geometric design patterns known only to have been produced by the Tausug and the Yakan of southern Philippines. Darhata was one of the foremost exponents of this weave when she finally shuttled her last weft in 2005.

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Textile Weaver, Tagabawa Bagobo, Bansalan municipality, Davao del Sur province, southeastern Mindanao island, southern Philippines.

SALINTA MONON is one of the very few weavers in southern Mindanao where the abaca fibers are tie-dye woven into the distinctive cloth, *inabel*. Even among the Bagobo, the craft is a waning art uplifted by even fewer weavers like Salinta Monon, who passed into legend in 2009. She was proclaimed in 1998 for weaving the *inabel*. The abaca cloth has such rarity and uniqueness, and the mastery of those who spun it is marked by so much virtuosity, that two national treasures were proclaimed in the same category. Endangered not only because of the number of remaining proponents, there is also the matter of declining cultivation of the abaca plant.