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# Slim's exhibit turns to playfulness for inspiration

By **Pauline Joy M. Gutierrez** - October 31, 2018



In Photo: Pop-art terno with Roy Lichtenstein print by Vanessa Pinlac fronts the other playful garments in the section.

REMNANTS of childhood memories adorned the recent Slim's Fashion and Arts School's student exhibit at the Fashion Hall of SM Megamall. The annual event's theme for this year was *laro*, which took form in pieces of clothing inspired by that past time of youth.

On view was a showcase of fashion all designed, cut and sewn by students, each ensemble with a distinct playfulness gleaned from the psychedelic patterns, whimsical silhouettes and exuberant colors. Accessorizing the garments were oversized watch heads by Swatch's "Think Fun" collection.

"These are some of the best works of our graduate students, and we've been doing this for seven or eight years. It began in the school, then it migrated to Greenbelt 5 until SM Megamall generously gave us free space every year," said fashion educator Mark Higgins. More than 50 alumni from the school's advanced classes were able to present their works, which, according to Mark, took complex construction techniques and long hours of labor to create.

A 1963 *Crying Girl* comic illustration by pop-art icon Roy Lichtenstein turned into custom-printed fabric by Vanessa Pinlac fronted one of the exhibit's section. Claire Francisco's retro take on the outfit inspired by the 1980s arcade game "Pacman," on the other hand, was Swatch endorser Anne Curtis's personal favorite. Two hundred and 20 strands of hand-made jersey piping were draped to create a terno by Dianne Obusan that echoed the childhood game Chinese Garter. Meanwhile, a dress by Megan Lev featured an explosion of embroidered and appliquéd elements inspired by the Pinball machine.

A Paloma Picart organza gown, on the other hand, used repurposed denim jeans to capture Cinderella's transformation from rags to riches. A hand-painted and embellished gown by Angelique Co emulated the board game Snakes & Ladders, while Banjo Cordero's color-blocked shift dress features spirals that resemble the paper pinwheel. An evening gown by Isobel Juan was inspired by jigsaw puzzles.

The students' take on the barong Tagalog was a mix of patterns and colors. Nicole Pineda merged traditional bespoke techniques with edgy street style for a Pacman-inspired piece. Miel Arena used material manipulation techniques to create a 3D interpretation of a kaleidoscope's prism. The staple piece of clothing in Filipino culture also took an interesting interpretation in the hand-dyed barong by Yvonne Tabanao, which was based from the Japanese board game Tsuro.

There was also a barong with a Dragon Boat race motif, featuring embroidered appliqué and carved wooden paddles by Marilen Manuilit.

"Slim's isn't exactly known as an easy school. We always tell students: 'If you're comfortable, you're not growing,'" related Sandy Higgins, co-director of the fashion institute, in an interview.

Sandy and brother Mark are heirs to the House of Slim, which was founded in Manila by iconic Philippine designer and their mother, Salvacion Lim Higgins ("Slim") with her sister Purificacion. "My mother's fashion house was built in 1947. By the time it reached the late 1950s, she was already very well-known and a lot of her clients were telling her, 'Sana you open a school *naman* to share your knowledge with other people. In 1960 they opened the school and it's now the oldest fashion institution in the country,'" recounted Mark.

Together, sisters Salvacion and Purificacion wrote the highly technical lessons that continue to serve as a solid foundation for the school's curriculum today—a procedure that has become widely known as "the Slim's Method."

The school has produced some of the country's most notable designers and industry heavyweights, including Joe Salazar, Oskar Peralta, Cesar Gaupo, Oliver Tolentino, Michael Cinco and Joey Samson.



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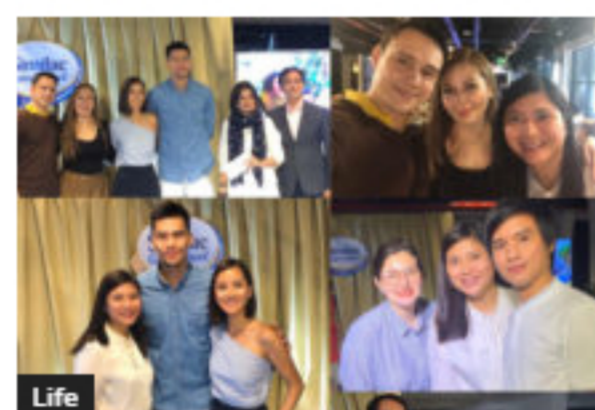
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