the NEW SCHOOL

Recent years have brought about a rebirth of historical garments. Through spinning memory and meaning into fabric, clothing instead becomes a wearable expression of the self—connecting culture, body, and cloth. *L'Officiel Philippines* speaks to eight fashion designers about their roles in transforming the Philippine fashion landscape. Giving life to their ideas are models Siobhan, Jella, Jach, and Bethany who take the form of modern muses revisiting our shared history.

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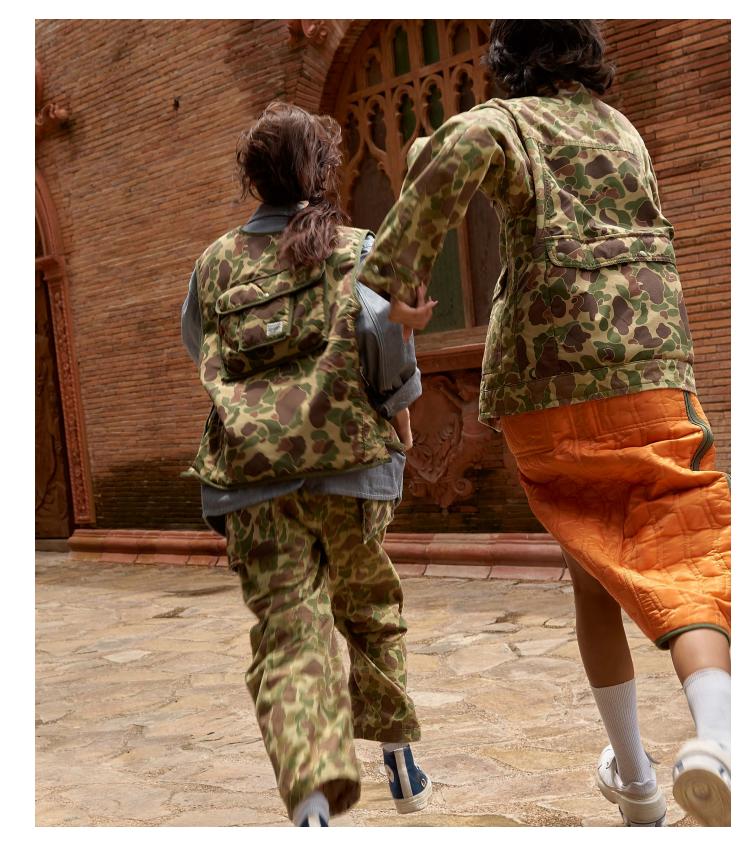


BIANCA JIMENEZ

Three years ago, Bianca Jimenez launched *Ma. Collecta* (pronounced Maria Collecta). The brand's first collection was called *Life in Piña*. As its name suggests, it featured pieces made from the fabric generally associated as scratchy cultural attire. It's not exactly an everyday textile, but Jimenez gave it a contemporary refresh. "The baro't saya is beautiful," admits Jimenez. "But we can respectfully push it forward." She introduced wearable pieces with unique contemporary cuts. As it turns out, piña holds shape quite well—while at the same time boasting a delicate, lustrous sheen. "I want people like me—young Filipina women, strong Filipina women—to appreciate our culture. And, while doing so, feel strong and beautiful at the same time," shares the self-taught designer.

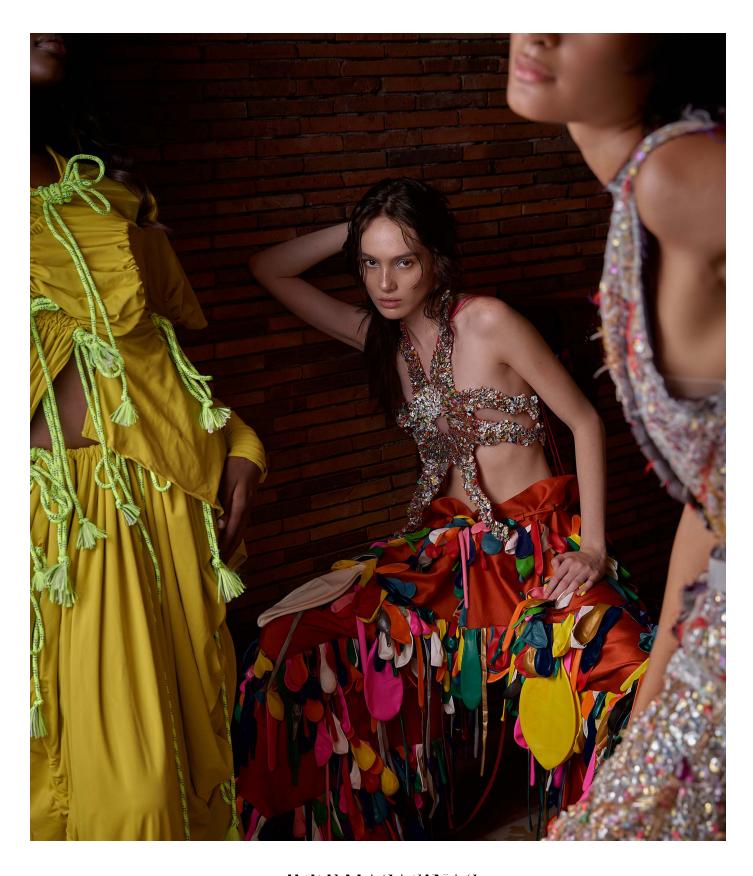






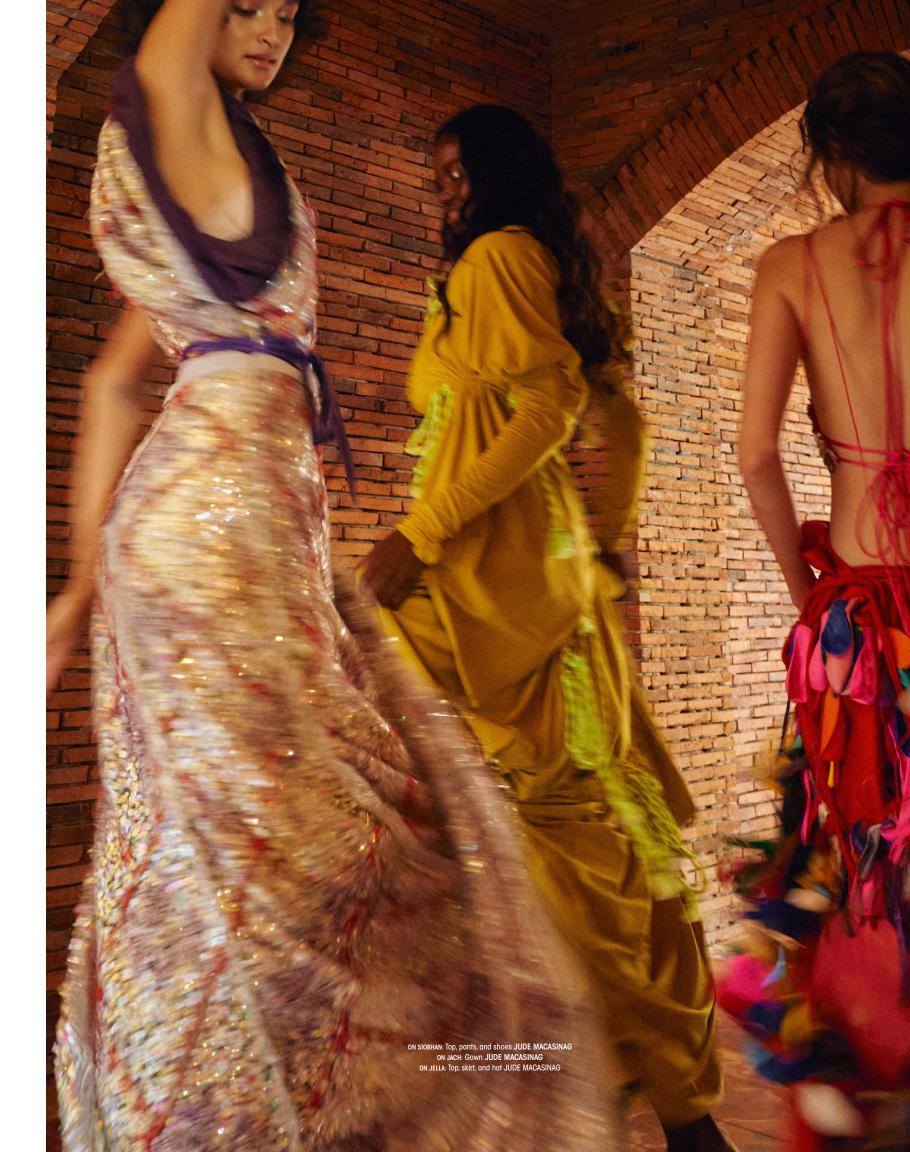
FORTUNE W.W.D.

Fortune W.W.D. is a work in progress. That isn't meant in a negative light, on the contrary, it's a very good thing. The menswear line is constantly evolving and exploring. In pursuit of innovation, the brand places value on collaboration. They've partnered with local artisans in the past. Less than three years ago, they worked with visual artist Luis Antonio Santos on the G.I. Vented Hawaiian Shirt. The shirt was printed with hyperrealistic paintings of yero or galvanized iron, which is used as roofing throughout the country. From maximalist camouflage to minimal classics, Fortune W.W.D. keeps things interesting and leaves everyone anticipating the next drop. Amid the variation of the Fortune W.W.D.'s offerings, what stays constant is the brand's commitment to functionality, utility, and quality. It's everyday workwear for the modern Filipino.



JUDE MACASINAG

Gifted sketchbooks at just three years old, Jude Macasinag started doodling fashion figures early. At only 18 years old, he already had a few clients—a network formed through word-of-mouth recommendations. The young designer headed to Paris after high school, eventually landing himself a sought-after scholarship at Institut Français de la Mode (IFM). Macasinag culminated his undergraduate program with a collection called *Manifesto*. "Manifesto is a hotpot of everything," shares Macasinag. He makes references to his home and family. There's a piece made with colorful balloons from children's parties, one created as an ode to a late grandfather, and another a daring reimagining of the legendary terno. "The ultimate [goal] when I make clothes is that I want it to make meaning to people," says Macasinag.

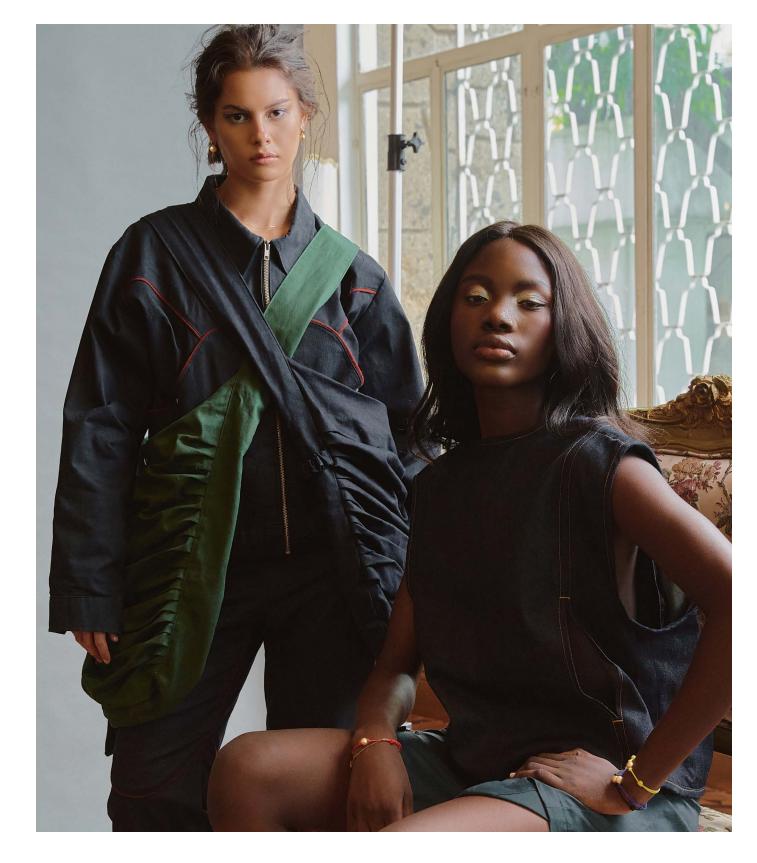




BITHIA REYES

As a child, Bithia Reyes observed her mother designing clothes. "My mom is a bridal gown designer," shares Reyes. "I would go with her to fittings, and I would see the joy of the bride whenever she'd be happy with her gown. I thought, 'Okay, I want to be part of an industry that makes people happy." For *Gunita*, her graduate thesis at De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde, she created pieces inspired by Philippine nature. The word *gunita* translates to remember or memory. She drew inspiration from her late father, who worked in agriculture. "I wanted to work with natural materials," shares Reyes. "I worked with the Itneg tribe to work with natural dyes. I also wanted to use natural Philippine fibers as much as possible: piña, jusi, and piña silk."





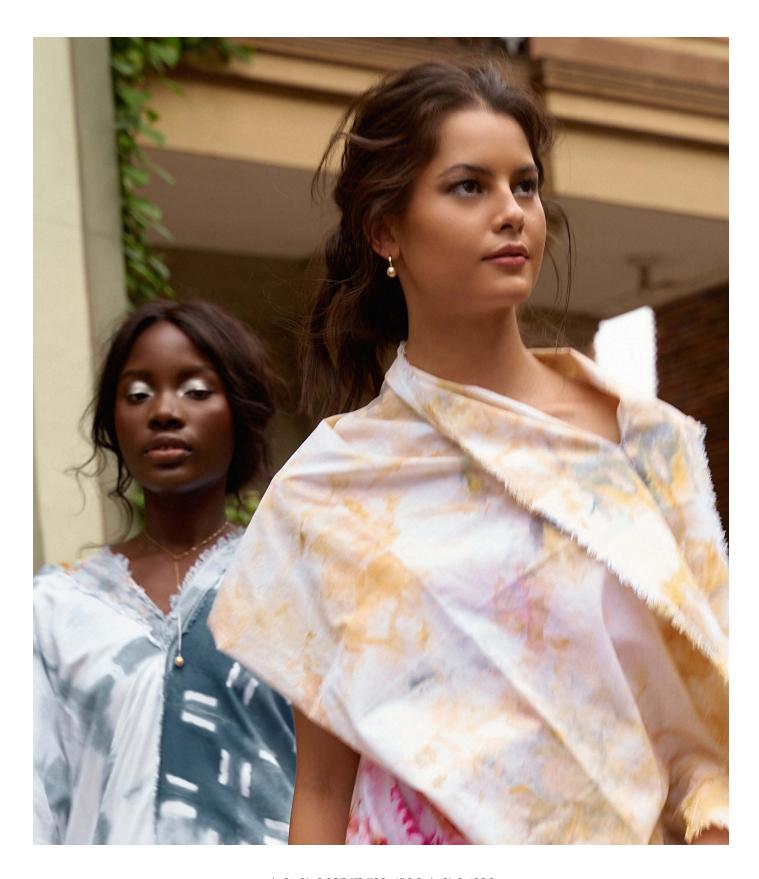
CONSTRUCTION LAYERS

Industrial design duo Christian Philippe Garcia and Kendrick Cay are the brains behind Construction Layers (also known as CLAY). Launched in 2019, the brand creates unisex clothing with a utilitarian edge. They made waves in the Philippine fashion scene in 2021, when their second collection *TIMESCAPES* was released. The lineup was characterized by its subversion of traditional silhouettes. The best example of this would be the Origami Shorts, which, at first glance, seem like basic bottoms, but the shape could be altered by the wearer. "The brand ethos of "Embodiment of Progression" serves as a driving force to motivate and improve, or even disrupt, ideas from the past, so they can be recontextualized to the present.



LENGOK

The designer behind Le Ngok, Carla Zhang, specializes in mixed media wear. Her creations usually include more than one textile or sewing method. "I challenge myself to push the boundaries when I create," shares the SoFA Design Institute student. "I always experiment with various techniques to create interesting pieces." While looking through her design portfolio, one should expect the unconventional—sleeves made with foam fruit wrappers, origami skirts embellished with mirror stickers, and gowns crafted with reflective material. But it's not only aesthetics that matter to Zhang. She uses these eccentricities to tackle issues like overconsumption and body image. "To me, designing a collection is like storytelling," explains the designer. "Every detail of the clothing carries meaning."



ADRIENNE CHARUEL

Adrienne Charuel initially took up fashion design at ESMOD Paris, where she learned the French approach to dressmaking. In 2016, she moved to New York. It was here that she founded Maison Métisse. Hoping to decompress from urban life, she took up Japanese Saori weaving, a craft allowing the art of *wabi-sabi* to flourish. "[Imperfections and texture] add this character and truth to the item," shares the designer. When she found herself back in the Philippines, she realized that she could connect the Philippine weaving tradition with international design practices. Today, she collaborates with Filipino weavers and artisans (the Itneg tribe, La Paz weavers, and DAWN migrant women) to create for Maison Métisse. They often develop clothing and accessories through a process of textile development, hand-dyeing, and embroidery.

