

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.

By DANIELLE RAMOS
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LEBY LE MORIA

A scroll through Le Moria's social media is a feast for the eyes: you'll find a melange of manually-cut faux fur, asymmetrical cuts, and raw textile. These visuals spark emotions that inspire learning—surprise, awe, interest, and confusion. The viewer is probed to think. One particularly meaningful work is Le Moria's series called, *Skin's Skin Remember?* Colorful square fabrics are buttoned together to create a customizable garment. It's unique in that, unlike a quilt, the fabric can be put together and broken apart, depending on the user's preferences. "I used materials that are familiar and created memories with me," shares the designer. "Each piece of clothing is a book of stories from my memory or a diary with excited energy waiting for me to reminisce [about] each one."

ON SIOBHAN: Shirt and shorts LEBY LE MORIA Earrings and necklace VI JEWELRY ON JACH: Dress and hat LEBY LE MORIA Sandals JOS Bracelets VI JEWELRY
ON BETHANY: Dress LEBY LE MORIA Earrings, necklace, and rings VI JEWELRY ON JELLA: Jacket, hat, and shoes LEBY LE MORIA Rings VI JEWELRY



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.



ON SIOBHAN: Dress, top, and shawl MA. COLLECTA Shoes ANNIE & LORI Rings VI JEWELRY
ON JACH: Shawls (worn as tops) and pants MA. COLLECTA Sandals JOS Earrings and necklaces VI JEWELRY



ON SIOBHAN: Hats (worn layered), vest, shirt, and pants FORTUNE W.W.D.
ON JACH: Jacket and skirt FORTUNE W.W.D.



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.



ON SIOBHAN: Top, pants, and shoes JUDE MACASINAG
 ON JACH: Gown JUDE MACASINAG
 ON JELLA: Top, skirt, and hat JUDE 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.”



ON JACH: Dress BITHIA Earrings and bracelet VI JEWELRY
ON SHOHAN: Dress and trousers BITHIA Earrings VI JEWELRY
ON JELLA: Gown BITHIA Bracelets and rings VI JEWELRY
ON BETHANY: Top and pants BITHIA Ring, necklaces, and earrings VI JEWELRY



ON BETHANY: Shirt, pants, and bags CONSTRUCTION LAYERS Shoes ANNIE & LORI Earrings and necklace VI JEWELRY
 ON JELIA: Vest and shorts CONSTRUCTION LAYERS Socks ANDANTÉ Sandals SEBASTIAN & SAVANNAH Bracelets VI JEWELRY



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.



ON JELLA: Top, pants, and gown LE NGOK Rings VI JEWELRY
ON BETHANY: Headpiece, top, and dresses (worn layered) LE NGOK Rings VI JEWELRY
ON JACH: Dress and leg warmers LE NGOK Rings VI JEWELRY

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.



ON BETHANY: Top and shawl (worn as dress) MAISON MÉTISSE Bracelet and earrings VI JEWELRY Sandals JOS
ON JELLA: Dresses (worn layered) MAISON MÉTISSE Rings and necklace VI JEWELRY Sandals SEBASTIAN & SAVANNAH

CREATIVE DIRECTION Loris Peña MAKEUP Anthea Bueno (Siobhan and Bethany) and Sylvina Lopez (Jach and Jella) HAIR Mark Familiar (Siobhan and Bethany) and Dale Mallari (Jach and Jella)
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