



WOOD ART Jose Alcantara's artwork featuring elements of both Christian and Muslim culture

AN ALCANTARA AT THE MUSEUM

You can now view a private collection artwork at the National Museum



By **CEDIE SALIDO**

It was a great afternoon for all the attendees who witnessed the unveiling of artwork by renowned artist **Jose Alcantara** at the National Museum of Fine Arts. Alcantara started his career at a very young age, honing his skills as an apprentice to **Isabelo Tampinco**, prince of Philippine sculpture during the colonial period. He also worked as a carver in **Gonzalo Puyat's** furniture shop.

Despite the lack of opportunity to pursue a degree in the arts, Alcantara was able to develop his talent and skills through experience. He became a self-taught artist and, through years of hard work, managed to win multiple recognition here and abroad. He was the first Filipino to win in the first Southeast Asian Art Conference and Competition for his creation *Behold The Man*.

In 1961, he was commissioned by Philam Life Foundation to do an artwork, a wood carving to be put up on the wall of Philam Life auditorium.

The auditorium became popular for its collection of artists, including designers such as **Bolt**, **Beranelk**, and **Newman**.

Surprisingly, the wood carving he made was nameless until the museum decided to put tentative title *Muslims Greeting Filipino Christians*, as the art depicted elements from both Muslim to Christian culture.

Louie, the youngest son of Jose Alcantara, visited the Philippines with his son to show him the creation of his father. When they arrived, they found out that his father's artwork was hidden in the dark theater. Louie expressed his immediate concern, not knowing that Jose's artwork was already scheduled to be exhibited in a museum, with the artwork of his colleague, **Vicente Manansala**.

Aside from celebrating Alcantara's masterpiece, the unveiling also served as a renewal of vows, a partnership between the National Museum and Philam Life Foundation.

It includes the five-year institutional grant in helping to preserve, restore, and to manage key pieces of Philam Life's art collection.

"We hope this partnership will pave the way for further appreciation and cultivation of our love for the arts," said **Max Ventura**, Philam Foundation president. Present at the event were Philam Life chief executive officer **Kelvin Ang**, National Museum director **Jeremy Barns**, National Museum assistant director **Ana Labrador**, with the artist's family, grandson **Jose C Alcantara III**, daughter-in-law **Amy Wannamaker**, and granddaughter-in-law **Eunice Alcantara**.

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PARTNERSHIPS FOR ART From left: Philam Foundation chairman Albee Cantos, Philam Life chief executive officer Kevin Ang, National Museum director Jeremy Barns, National Museum assistant director Ana Labrador, and Philam Life Foundation president Max Ventura



FAMILY LEGACY Granddaughter-in-law Eunice Alcantara, daughter-in-law Amy Wannamaker, and grandson Jose C Alcantara III.