

Australian Filipina

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BUSINESS

Ceiling, schmeiling

If you can't climb the ladder, catch the lift. There's an industry body that helps women get on to company boards, discovers MICHELLE BALTAZAR.

You imagine yourself chairing a meeting about a possible takeover of a company. Or maybe after 10 years of hard slog, you want to be the big boss of your big boss. But wait, what's that familiar clink you hear? Oh, that's right. It's the glass ceiling.

"More than half of the top 200 largest companies in Australia (ASX200) do not have a female board director"

New research shows more than half of the top 200 largest companies in Australia (ASX200) don't have a female board director, a worrying statistic given that half of the entire workforce are women.

Other studies have also shown that in certain industries, women make better chief executives than men, which makes the lack of women in senior posts all the more puzzling.

But there are several organisations, including Women on Boards (WOB), that are campaigning to change the lousy statistics against women in executive roles. Two months ago, it created what's called the Boardroom Diversity Index, which tracks the number of women on the boards of ASX200 companies, credit unions, superannuation funds, national sporting bodies, top government business boards and key research centres.



Nicole Doughty sets her sights high. Photo: Michelle Baltazar.

Ruth Medd, WOB chair, said that by monitoring which companies promote more women, the public has the opportunity to identify companies that are cracking the glass ceiling and those that don't.

In a name-and-shame report, WOB has listed 'the good guys', or the companies that added at least one woman to their board and 'the laggards', or the companies without the woman's touch.

And it's not for lack of talent that there aren't enough women qualified to become a company director. WOB has a database of more than 7,000 professional women seeking directorships.

Medd said WOB is lobbying for

all ASX200 companies to have a minimum 25 per cent of the board made up of female directors by 2012 – a realistic three-year target.

To put it in perspective, there are 1,474 total directorship positions on ASX200 companies as at last year, of which 128 (or around 8 per cent) are filled by women.

"Based on these numbers, we will require an additional 242 positions to be filled by women. Not an impossible ask," she said.

Talent? Check. Smarts? Check. Outfit? Check. Now, all you have to do is go to the website www.womenonboards.org.au for more info on how to get that board seat. ●

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For more articles, go to our website on www.australianfilipina.com

EDITOR'S NOTE

We hope you enjoy the first Australian Filipina newsletter!

If you're reading this, it means you're one of our subscribers from the first time around – or one of our friends who've been so supportive of our magazine.

It's a new year and I'm excited. For many, it always brings with it renewed hope, inspiration and motivation. For Michelle and I, this newsletter signifies a great start to 2010 because the road we travelled to get to this point – since trying to bring back the mag after the last print issue in 2007 – had a few speed bumps (I'm pictured with mine below) . For the Australian Filipina magazine, we hope it's the beginning of a beautiful friendship with the Filipino-Australian community.

To all our readers, may 2010 bring you everything you've been working hard for. Please join us on Facebook at The Australian Filipina group or follow 'ausfilipina' on Twitter.

*Thanks for reading!
Mimmette xo*



Y, of course we care

ANA GACIS sets the record straight on her generation.

"So tired from a jam packed weekend of fun."

"Eating ube ice cream and watching under seigee"

"Totally procrastinating -.-"
(2 people like this status)

After reading the latest Facebook status updates of some friends, it's forgivable to think that perhaps the youth of today have nothing on the marching protestors that characterised the youth of the past. You might even call us an apathetic bunch, obsessively self-absorbed with our internet alter egos haunting the halls of Facebook, MySpace, Bebo or whatever new craze hits the fan. You might even be one of those shaking their heads at the crowds piling into the clubs on a Friday or Saturday night asking why the young don't try to make a difference anymore. Why don't we do something worthwhile? Why doesn't Gen-Y care?

I can't speak for all of Gen-Y. I can barely speak on my own behalf – my opinions are so transient they seem to change as often as my status updates. But I will put this thought out into an unsuspecting world. Don't log out on us just yet.

Everywhere I turn, my friends – the so-called 'youth of today' – are organising fundraisers, youth forums and charity fun runs. Facebook invites and email chains have revolutionised the way we mobilise our friends and rally them to our causes. You won't see us visibly handing out leaflets and occupying soapboxes on the corners to be heard. The people you do see are the sorry few who won't accept that the computer is not just a tool for capitalist manipulation.

To make a terribly generalistic statement, the youth of today are the uniquely proactive individuals who happen to be born in this 'internet age' and are exceptionally adept at getting involved. If they want to be part of their university society or, join a group championing



Image: The Filipino Student Society of UNSW



Image by Edd Aragon

human rights or eliminating poverty, they Google it. They don't even need personal invites to events they're passionate about that pop up on one of their friend's Facebook accounts – they can rock up and see what's happening on their own. I'm not so sure how Gen-X would have taken to an impersonal invite, but it seems that for many in Gen-Y, the cause speaks for itself.

It is through the powerful tool of the Internet that cash-strapped students have managed to avoid the pitfalls of high phone bills to let other intrigued minds know what's going on. Don't underestimate the power of a status update

"Don't underestimate the power of a status update either. Ask any of your 'young' friends how many people read the paper and how many people read and comment on their friend's status updates."

either. Ask any of your 'young' friends how many people read the paper and how many people read and comment on their friend's status updates and once you compare you'll realise that we're more connected than we think and have a greater impact on each other than ever before.

The more we know about each other the more we're inspired by each other. In 2008 there was only one youth forum for Filipinos in Sydney. The following year, it was everywhere.

In addition to youth forums, there are several youth groups who are making a difference to the lives of young people, including many Australian-Filipinos, and they have been for years. To name a few, St. Clair, St. Andrews Marayong, St. Aiden's youth groups, the Penrith Filipino Youth Group Barkada, the Filipino Society of UNSW, so many dance groups and basketball

teams. Then there's the Youth for Christ, a group that's been developing young leaders for years and spawned the anti-poverty movement Gawad Kalinga, which sends hundreds of youth volunteers to the Philippines to help the poor.

The youth also inspire individuals. I have friends who are executives in political organisations, Australian ambassadors to the UN, scholars in London and solar engineering. I even have friends who are acclaimed artists and hard working baristas at Gloria Jeans while taking music lessons. We are out there organising multicultural concerts to raise money for the

poor in the Philippines, winning karate competitions, building our future internet spaces as graphic designers and web developers, and even starting magazines like the *Australian Filipina*. All of this – while also trying to maintain our souls and our minds.

Perhaps society has just become more disaggregate than we ever expected. We meet less as a community, know fewer people in the town square, and hold our bags tighter on the trains. Perhaps the youth we do see are those who seem to be at school. But don't forget that the youth whom you don't see are probably too busy going to their next training session, working hard at a retail job to pay for their textbooks or studying to finish a degree and making a real difference to their future, and to ours.

I'm not sure what my rant is about exactly. I'm a stressed out uni student who's meant to be writing her taxation law assignment. But I just had a compulsion to share this thought, so I logged onto my gmail account and clicked 'send'.

Share your thoughts on the subject and email Ana at anagacis@gmail.com

FEATURED ARTIST

Maia Valenzuela: Illustrator



There are plenty of talented creatives in our community. MIMMETTE ROLDAN speaks to Maia Valenzuela, a graphic designer by day and avid illustrator forever.

What type of artwork do you do?

Right now I'm getting back to basics – creating detailed black and white pieces using a plain old drawing pen and some good Japanese paper (I find that Japanese sketchbooks

have the best quality paper for intricate drawings). I was doing a lot of digital illustrations before but I get more satisfaction with drawings made by hand, it feels more accomplished and genuine. This year, I've been busy with my day job, so along with my hand-drawn illustrations, I've also been creating a few digital collages in my spare time.

How did you get into it and how long have you been doing it?

Basically, I've been drawing for as long as I can remember, one of my first memories was drawing deformed orange bunnies with my dad, and I remember going to preschool, drawing a big shrimp, and asking the teacher to write 'chicken' on it. My father was always collecting old maps and wooden carvings, so he would always encourage me to sketch the patterns in the woodwork, and just having those maps around the house was very interesting. I've always been creating things all through grade school, high school and college, and now I'm working as a graphic designer, so I guess you can say that art is a big part of my life. ●

* For more on this interview, visit www.australianfilipina.com.

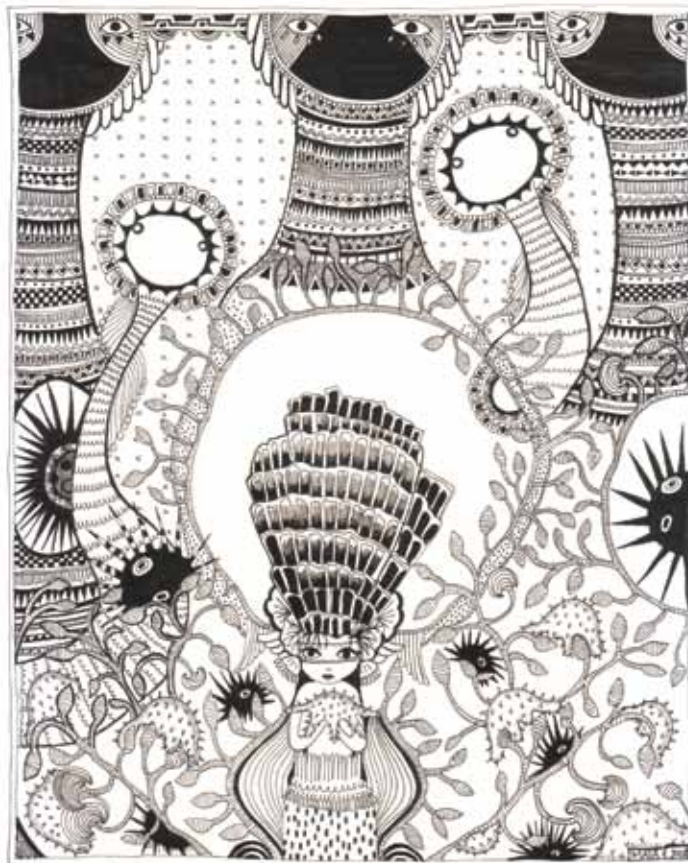


Image: One of Maia's favourite pieces - a self portrait called "The Sea Inside".

CULTURE

Open audition for Rizal play

So, you're a doctor, an accountant, a lawyer or a nurse. But really you've always wanted to know what it's like to be an actor, a director's assistant or a stage costume designer.

Here's your chance to make your dreams come true in an OPEN AUDITION for an upcoming Rizal play in Sydney. No stage experience necessary.

This year, a group of passionate

artisans in their respective fields – have decided to collaborate and formed a new theatre company called the Fine Artist Collaboration (FAC).

FAC's maiden project is theatre production titled MY SON, JOSE, which revolves around the life of the Philippines' beloved national hero at the time he was awaiting execution.

The play is adapted from HER SON, JOSE RIZAL, written by the late Philippine National Artist Leonor Orosa-Goquingco (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonor_Orosa-Goquinco), a trailblazer in dance and the written word.

Armando Reyes, one of FAC's founding artistic directors, will be directing the play. He said they are still looking for actors to play the following roles:

- Jose Rizal – ages 10, 21 and 35
- Dona Theodora
- Soledad (Rizal's sister) – ages 7, 9, 17 and 29

"Mother, do you remember the tale of the moth you told me when I was a child on your knee? You told me not to be like the young moth and I answered you, the flame was so beautiful it was worth dying for ..."

- Paciano (Rizal's brother) – age 21
 - Governor-General Rafael Izquierdo – (must be mestizo looking) – age 50 to 60
- Reyes said they also need people to help behind the scenes including:
- Lighting technician
 - Costume director assistant
 - Backstage hands
 - Stage assistants
- For all enquiries, call; Albert Dimarucut (0401467000) Brian Lorenz (0437476651) or Armando Reyes (0466156639, 97541573).

Anyone interested must be able to commit to weekend rehearsals from April this year. ●

Who is FAC?

The FINE ARTIST COLLABORATION (FAC) is a dedicated group of professional Filipino artists in Sydney who have banded together to help preserve, promote and develop Philippine arts and culture through theatre, music and dance collaborations.

The FAC Production and Artistic Team are: Alberto Dimarucut and Armando Reyes, founding artistic directors; Brian Lorenz Babon, Company Manager; Albert Prias, Production Designer; Neria Soliman, Marketing Director; Evelyn Zaragosa, Publicity and Promotions Director and Dr. Mars Cavestany-Singh, Artistic Consultant.

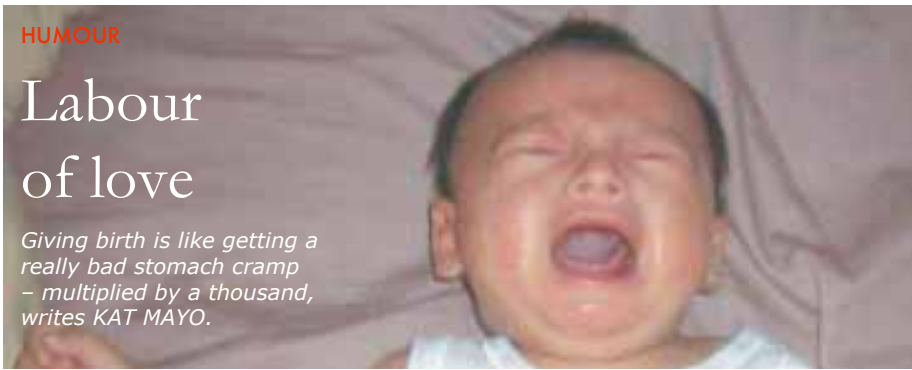


Jose Rizal bust at Central Station, Sydney. Photo: Michelle Baltazar

HUMOUR

Labour of love

Giving birth is like getting a really bad stomach cramp – multiplied by a thousand, writes KAT MAYO.



When I was pregnant with my first child, many women were quick to reassure me that labour will be just like a very bad stomach cramp. “And don’t worry,” they said, “you’ll forget the pain soon after.” I believed them. Three children later, I know for a fact that they lied. If there’s anything I’ve learned about having children, it’s that it hurts. A lot.

1. Labour hurts

No matter how well you prepare yourself, you can’t imagine the pain of childbirth until it hits you. Worried that you’re having contractions? If you’re not doubled over in pain, ready to gnaw your husband’s arm off for his contribution to the torture you’re experiencing, then it’s not the real thing. “Women have been doing this since

the beginning of time,” you’ll hear your midwife say. The best response to this is to nod your head while you ask for an epidural. Now. Anyone who suggests that the entire business should be captured on video is clearly no friend of yours.

2. Recovery hurts

“That wasn’t so bad,” I stated proudly to my husband, as I enjoyed the heady rush of cuddling our new baby in my arms for the first time. Then my pain relief wore off. I ached in places I didn’t even realise I had. When the nurse told me that she could give me pain pills only every six hours, I nearly cried. I wondered if all my bits and pieces would ever work again. “You stay on your side of the bed,” I growled at my husband every time he tried to kiss me good night.

3. The bills hurt

Even if you’re smart enough to forego the Bugaboo pram, the Stokke cot and coordinated, top-of-the-line sheet sets in every nursery theme known to mankind, your savings account will go into depression. Forget about using the maternity payment to buy a plasma TV. You’ll need it to pay for your child’s first birthday party if you plan to celebrate it in true Filipino style – 200 guests and a jumping castle. Never mind that the birthday celebrant will probably sleep through the entire thing.

Then there are the ongoing costs of raising a child. My family has gone through enough disposable nappies to create our own toxic landfill by now, and the only good thing about the cost of childcare is that I earn loyalty points on my credit card. Soon I’ll have enough to get a free plasma TV.

Obviously, the joys of parenthood far outweigh the pain, or we wouldn’t be crazy enough to go through it over and over again. Once your child is out of nappies and old enough for school, all your suffering will fade into insignificance. But before you congratulate yourself, you should know that it isn’t over, yet. There’s one more kind of pain you have to endure as your child gets older – a pain in the neck. ●

DANCE REVIEW

Socalicious

Mondayitis wearing you down? There’s a dance class near Central Station in Sydney that will get you feeling more festive on the worst day of the week, writes MICHELLE BALTAZAR.

Dance Studio 101 is one of Sydney’s best-kept secrets in dance. It hosts a dance class called Caribbean Fyah every Monday night, 7pm, at an uber-cool dance studio minutes away from Central Station.

The class includes a dance called soca, which is short for Soul Calypso, a musical genre from the Caribbean islands of Trinidad & Tobago. Think reggae dancing on steroids – with a lot of jumping, a lot of booty-shaking and a lot of heart.

Tamara Vahn, who hails from Trini herself, teaches the class and gets a perfect 10 in my books. I’ve attended her classes many times and am very impressed with the way she breaks the dance steps into easily manageable chunks.

And with the world-famous Trinidad & Tobago Carnivale happening this February, a class with Tamara can get you the same festival feeling without the hassles of getting stuck at a busy airport.

Tamara’s class is also a great way to discover the studio itself, which also teaches dancehall, tango and Brazilian Samba. Or you could get your friends together to attend a Solid Gold 80’s dance course, where everyone gets to sip champagne,



Main: Tamara teaching one of her classes at Dance Studio 101, near Central Station in Sydney.



Tamara Vahn

dress up in 80s leotards and work on a big routine at the end (think Thriller or Dirty Dancing).

Whatever takes your fancy, there’s a dance class that will fit your style.

But when you wake up on a Monday and feel like stretching that weekend vibe, you should check out Tamara’s Caribbean Fyah!

Q&A with Tamara Vahn:

Why do you love soca so much?

It’s in me veins. But seriously, it is. And it’s such a free spirit type of music and dance. There’s no posturing. It’s not about thinking “I’m all that” or “I’m the best”. It’s all about having fun no matter

what your age, nationality, body shape or size and whether you’re a man or a woman. It’s just about being you and loving the moment.

For the fitness nuts out there, soca can be high-energy. Do you burn more kilojoules dancing soca in 45 minutes than interval running for the same time?

The byproduct of doing soca dance is the sweat! You just don’t notice ... you’re havin’ too much fun doing it.

What are the three dance moves that people are guaranteed to learn if they attend your class?

A ‘wine’, a ‘juk’ and a ‘get on bad!’ ●