

Pinoy Art-Rock Band Gets New York Nod

Syjuco siblings A.G., Maxine, and Julian receive eight nominations for their band, Jack of None at New York's Independent Music Awards 2018

Siblings A.G. Syjuco, Maxine Syjuco, and Julian Syjuco of the Filipino experimental art-rock band, Jack of None, have received a total of eight nominations in this year's Independent Music Awards in New York City.

Dubbed as "The Grammys of the Independent Music Scene," the prestigious international competition has also bestowed individual artist nominations to A.G. Syjuco for Best Eclectic Producer of the Year, and Maxine Syjuco for Best Album Artist Photographer and Designer of the Year.

Collectively, A.G., Maxine, and Julian have received a total of 11 nominations at the Independent Music Awards since they released Jack of None's first album, *Who's Listening to Van Gogh's Ear?* in 2016 to last year's second album *Who Shot Bukoneski?*, and this year's EP *The Tuttle Tule Heart*. Included in these nominations have been Best Spoken Word Album of the Year, Best Eclectic Song of the Year, Best Eclectic Album of the Year, Best EP of the Year, and Best Lyric Video of the Year.

Among these 11 nominations, Jack of None was awarded the Grand Prize for Maxine in the category "Best Album Art, Photography and Design"—making her the first Filipina to be awarded in this international competition.

Throughout its 16-year run in the US, The Independent Music Awards has yet to bestow as many nominations on a single Filipino band as it has on Jack of None. The competi-



tion's panel of judges is comprised of esteemed musicians and artists from around the world, including Tom Waits, Tori Amos, Sepultura, Slayer, Ben Lee, The Kills, Sublime, Macy Gray, and Passenger.

Jack Of None is Manila's foremost experimental art-rock band, critically acclaimed for their unique fusion of poetry and spoken word with indus-

trials electronic rock music. Described as "a bold and courageous band comprised of musicians and poets, Jack of None is ahead of its time... Dark, thought-provoking, and most significant, this band transcends music into the realm of pure art."

In the words of New York critic Randy Radic for the *Huffington Post*, "Jack of None is extremely sui gener-

is, emanating a distinctive sonic quality unlike anything else... With cogent melodies shaded with dark new wave music and lyrics replete with Maxine's wispishly attractive vocals, this band has it going on."

And in the words of another critic, Jeremy Gladstone from Canada's *Sleeping Bag Studios*, "Jack of None is massively captivating and extraordinary. The three siblings are purely, utterly, and sonically brilliant. What they create is truly art as much as art could ever be."

Included in this year's panel of judges for the Independent Music Awards is Maxine Syjuco, who will be judging music categories in which Jack of None is excluded.

The Independent Music Awards 2018 was held recently at the Lincoln Center for Performing Arts in New York City. www.independentmusicawards.com | www.jackofnone.net | www.facebook.com/jackofnoneband



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Philippine Art in Hong Kong



At the Art Cube Gallery at Art Central Hong Kong, four Filipino artists recently shared a piece of the Philippine culture.

Guerrero Z. Habulan problematizes the idea of a unified, coherent self—a fictive invention that is promulgated to side-step the paradoxes of living in the contemporary moment. His stylistic and thematic approach is necessarily overlapping, complex, highly textured. By so doing, his works are less of a composition than a composite of elements, at once amplifying and subverting each other.

The works of **Joven Mansit** are post-colonial examinations of the Filipino identity in crisis—a mutable and mutating entity that grapples with the weight of historical baggage and the present claims of modernity. Referencing and appropriating old Filipino photographs (usually of men and women wearing fin-de-siècle dresses and ornaments), Mansit is notable for disrupting figurative harmony by introducing seemingly off-tangent and dissonant elements as a way of questioning and unsettling the arrogance of the past, historical records, and the collective memory.

The inextricable link between gold, war, politics and economy is translated, on the other hand, into a collection of works by **Keb Cerd** that both paints and animates war scene photographs to revisit the past and at the same time give it presence in this highly technologically-driven era. References to gold take the form of mining scenes that feature mining railways, dark tunnels, mechanical processing of gold ores, and miners sifting through piles of earth. These scenes are seamlessly blended into backdrops of ruins and rubbles of war-devastated cities, marching armies, and reconstruction efforts following a war. All monochromatic, the works capture the look of old photographs, only highlighted by the glittering yellow of gold.

No one in the Philippines has arguably come close to the iconography that **Jose Legaspi** has evolved through the years, which features a terrifying, pared-down, monochromatic realm that has the shades and textures of nightmares. Through figures possessed of dark intent, he maps out the deepest areas of the human soul where the most profound fears reside confronting the viewer with a mirror-image of a version of himself he doesn't wish to see. Sinister and deeply unsettling though they may be, the paintings are irresistible in their magnetizing power, searing their image on the retina and the mind. The works of Legaspi are difficult to avert one's gaze from. They are also unforgettable.