

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s
SPEECH AT THE 16th ANI NG DANGAL**

Metropolitan Theater, Manila
February 20, 2024

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It is wonderful to be in this building in all its glory and it is an appropriate place and time for us to be here. I supposed that the lights are lit up and this hall is brightly lit for our function this afternoon.

And I think the source of its glimmer is the star wattage of the talents who we have assembled here with us. For you represent the best of your craft, your luminous performances here and abroad have showcased the best that our country can offer.

Those who can act, dance, paint, sing, perform, sculpt, play, build also serve the flag because every time you step into the limelight, a powerful spotlight also shines upon our country. Every applause that you draw from the audience wherever in the world is also an adulation for the land of your birth which is rich in artistry.

You are ambassadors of our culture, have won the hearts of audiences here and abroad. It is time that you are honored by your own, in your homeland, to which you have given so much pride and joy.

More than that, you are sources of inspirations, to fellow artists who view them as an example in careers yet to be carved or to their fellowmen, whose spirits, amidst the business of living are roused by your performances.

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Art builds a strong nation, and a compassionate society. Art does not only entertain --- it enlightens, it educates, it elevates the quality of life. And these are what past and present Ani ng Dangal awardees have done for our country.

It is my view that many times we see us honoring the artists that we have here in the Philippines and we say it is for the good work that you have done, it is for

the beautiful works that you have brought to the world. But there is another important reason why we must honor our artists who in the end define our culture.

And the reason for that is the culture of a country, the culture of a people, that culture is the shared consciousness of that people. Thereby, your defining of our culture is the creation of the national consciousness, the shared consciousness of all Filipinos which is the way that we define what it is to be a Filipino. And that is how important is the work that you do.

The soaring songs that uplift the soul of our people. The words that move the nation. The brushstrokes that evoke our dreams and our aspirations. The edifices that are monuments to our skills.

What they show in reel mirrors the real, for the better. What dance moves they dazzle us with exhibit the energy of our race. What roles you portray are what we want in life to be manifest.

I am therefore delighted to join the National Commission for Culture and the Arts in conferring the prestigious “Ani ng Dangal” award to Filipino artists who have made the *[sic]* world their stage. This awarding ceremony is, indeed, a fitting event that concludes the National Arts Month.

I was told that there was no shortage of nominees; in fact, perhaps an oversupply of them. I was not surprised.

In a country dense with talents, where there are more singers per square kilometer than anywhere else in the world, this should no longer come as a surprise. Where the arts and crafts, and the traditional arts and crafts are beginning to once again be recognized, then we should not be surprised.

I would like to thank the NCCA for the hard work they have put in to put together this honor roll. Each awardee has an extensive portfolio which cannot be abridged in just a few sentences.

In fact, many of your works are so beautiful that prose cannot capture their majesty. Like great art, to absorb such beauty, it can only be experienced, it cannot be described.

So, as we honor our awardees today, I extend a heartfelt invitation to every artist across our nation: Continue to create, to innovate, to excel. What you create are essential works that add to our Gross National Happiness.

So, please act on your dreams, believe in your talent, dare to break ground, tear down the walls that cage your creativity, hone your craft. Rest assured, your

government in the Bagong Pilipinas will create a nurturing environment that will see your talent fully and finally bloom.

We know that art can only flourish under an atmosphere of freedom and under Bagong Pilipinas, this is something that we will guarantee.

Congratulations, once again, to the 2024 Ani ng Dangal Awardees.

Mabuhay kayo at ang mga manlilikhang Pilipino!

Mabuhay ang ating mga awardee!

Magandang hapon po at marami pong salamat!

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