

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City



TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **9373**

Introduced by Abang Lingkod Party-list Representative
Manuel "Manman" O. Ko

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Arts and culture are essential pillars of national identity, historical consciousness, creativity, and social cohesion. The Filipino people possess a rich and diverse artistic heritage that reflects the country's history, traditions, aspirations, and cultural plurality. From indigenous cultural expressions and traditional crafts to contemporary visual arts, literature, film, music, architecture, and digital media, the arts continue to shape the nation's cultural life and contribute significantly to education, tourism, innovation, and economic development.

In recognition of the importance of arts and culture, Proclamation No. 683 declared the month of February as National Arts Month in 1991. Since then, the annual observance has served as a platform for promoting artistic excellence, cultural appreciation, and public participation in creative activities throughout the country.

Despite the continuing observance of National Arts Month, its implementation remains largely dependent on administrative initiatives and annual programming. There is currently no comprehensive statutory framework institutionalizing the celebration, ensuring sustained government support, strengthening regional participation, expanding accessibility, and integrating arts promotion into broader national development efforts.

This proposed measure seeks to institutionalize National Arts Month every February and establish the National Arts Exhibition Program (NAEP) as the country's principal platform for nationwide artistic and cultural exhibitions, performances, educational activities, and creative showcases. The bill further aims to strengthen support for Filipino artists and cultural workers, encourage local government and private sector participation, promote cultural tourism, expand digital accessibility, and foster international cultural exchange.

The measure likewise aligns with the objectives of Republic Act No. 11904 by recognizing the vital role of the creative sector in national development and economic growth. It also reinforces the mandate of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts under Republic Act No. 7356 to preserve, promote, and develop Philippine arts and culture.

By institutionalizing National Arts Month through legislation, the State affirms its commitment to preserving Filipino cultural heritage, empowering artists and cultural workers, encouraging regional inclusivity, and ensuring that arts and culture remain accessible and relevant to all Filipinos.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



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**AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING NATIONAL ARTS MONTH EVERY
FEBRUARY, ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL ARTS EXHIBITION
PROGRAM, PROMOTING FILIPINO ARTS AND CULTURE, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “*National Arts Month Act*”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote and preserve Filipino arts and culture as cornerstones of national identity; ensure equitable access to artistic and cultural opportunities across all regions of the country; support Filipino artists and cultural workers; and strengthen the role of the arts in education, tourism, and national development. Toward this end, the State hereby institutionalizes the annual observance of National Arts Month every February, originally declared under Proclamation No. 683.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms.– For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- (a) *Artist* – any person engaged in the creation, performance, presentation, or promotion of artistic works in any recognized artistic discipline;
- (b) *Cultural Worker* – any person involved in cultural preservation, education, research, heritage conservation, cultural management, or related fields;

(c) *National Arts Exhibition Program (NAEP)* – the nationwide program established under this Act for the conduct of exhibitions, performances, and cultural showcases during National Arts Month;

(d) *Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs)/Indigenous Peoples (IPs)* – as defined under existing laws and regulations;

(e) *Digital Exhibition* – an online or virtual presentation of artistic and cultural works accessible through digital platforms.

(f) *Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)* – the bundle of rights granted to creators of original works as defined under Republic Act No. 8293, otherwise known as the “Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines.”

SECTION 4. *National Arts Month.* – The month of *February of every year* is hereby declared *National Arts Month*.

All national government agencies, local government units (LGUs), government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), educational institutions, and private entities are encouraged to participate.

SECTION 5. *National Arts Exhibition Program (NAEP).*

There is hereby established a *National Arts Exhibition Program (NAEP)* to be conducted annually during the observance of National Arts Month.

The program shall serve as the principal national platform for the promotion, exhibition, appreciation, and preservation of Filipino artistic and cultural expression, aligned with the goals of Republic Act No. 11904 or the “Philippine Creative Industries Development Act.”

SECTION 6. *Lead Implementing Agency.* - The National Commission for Culture and the Arts, pursuant to its mandate under Republic Act No. 7356, shall serve as the lead implementing agency of this Act, in coordination with the following:

(a) Department of Tourism;

(b) Department of Education;

(c) Commission on Higher Education;

(d) Local Government Units (LGUs);

(e) State universities and colleges (SUCs);

(f) Cultural institutions, civil society organizations, and private stakeholders.

SECTION 7. Scope of Exhibitions and Activities. - The NAEP shall include nationwide exhibitions, performances, competitions, workshops, lectures, screenings, and cultural showcases featuring, but not limited to:

- (a) Visual arts;
- (b) Performing arts;
- (c) Literary arts;
- (d) Film, animation, and digital media arts;
- (e) Indigenous and traditional arts;
- (f) Architectural and design arts;
- (g) Contemporary and experimental art forms.

Special consideration shall be given to marginalized communities, youth artists, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.

SECTION 8. National Flagship Arts Exhibition. - A National Flagship Arts Exhibition shall be conducted annually as the centerpiece celebration of National Arts Month.

The host city or province shall rotate yearly to ensure regional representation and cultural inclusivity, based on criteria established by the NCCA, including cultural significance, logistical capacity, accessibility, and local government support.

The NCCA, in coordination with the host LGU, shall oversee the planning and implementation of the National Flagship Arts Exhibition.

SECTION 9. Regional and Local Participation. - LGUs are encouraged, subject to the availability of local funds, to organize localized exhibitions, cultural activities, and artistic programs during National Arts Month.

Such activities shall endeavor to ensure participation from:

- (a) Provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays;
- (b) Indigenous cultural communities;
- (c) Local artists, cultural groups, and creative organizations;
- (d) Educational institutions and community-based organizations.

SECTION 10. Accessibility and Digital Reach. - To ensure broad public access and inclusivity:

- (a) Exhibitions and cultural activities conducted under this Act shall, whenever practicable, be free of charge or subsidized for the public;
- (b) Public spaces such as schools, parks, museums, libraries, and government buildings may be utilized for exhibitions and cultural activities;
- (c) Digital platforms and online technologies shall be utilized to provide virtual access to exhibitions, performances, and educational materials;
- (d) The NCCA may maintain a digital archive of NAEP activities; *Provided*, that the Intellectual Property Rights of the artists over their respective works shall remain protected and shall not be infringed upon by the digitalization or archiving process.

SECTION 11. Integration with Education and Tourism. -

(a) Education Integration. - The Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education shall encourage the integration of National Arts Month activities into academic and extracurricular programs, including:

- 1. Student exhibitions;
- 2. Workshops and competitions;
- 3. Cultural performances;
- 4. Heritage and arts appreciation activities.

(b) Tourism Promotion.- The Department of Tourism shall integrate National Arts Month into national and international tourism campaigns and promote cultural destinations, festivals, and artistic events associated with the celebration.

SECTION 12. Incentives for Private Sector Participation. - To encourage private sector support and participation in National Arts Month activities:

- (a) Donations, sponsorships, and grants made for the NAEP may qualify for allowable deductions and tax incentives in accordance with existing tax laws, rules, and regulations.
- (b) The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), in consultation with the NCCA, shall issue the necessary guidelines to streamline the availment of these incentives.

- (c) Appropriate recognition may be granted to major sponsors, partners, and supporters of National Arts Month activities.

SECTION 13. International Participation and Cultural Exchange.- The NCCA, in coordination with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Tourism, shall:

- (a) Facilitate the participation of international artists and cultural groups in National Arts Month activities;
- (b) Promote Filipino arts and culture abroad through cultural exchange programs and international exhibitions;
- (c) Encourage collaboration between Filipino and foreign artists and cultural institutions.

SECTION 14. Support for Artists and Cultural Workers. - The NCCA shall provide support mechanisms for participating artists, including performance fees, exhibition subsidies, and other expenses during the duration of the NAEP events.

SECTION 15. Monitoring and Evaluation.- The NCCA shall establish a monitoring and evaluation system to assess the implementation and impact of this Act, including:

- (a) Attendance and participation rates;
- (b) Regional distribution of activities;
- (c) Economic, cultural, and tourism impact;
- (d) Public engagement and accessibility metrics.

An annual report shall be submitted to the House of Representatives Special Committee on Creative Industry and Performing Arts

SECTION 16. Appropriations.- Such sums as may be necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

The NCCA and participating agencies may likewise utilize available funds from their respective appropriations, subject to existing budgeting, accounting, and auditing laws, rules, and regulations.

LGUs may allocate funds from appropriate local sources to support activities under this Act.

The NCCA may also receive grants, donations, sponsorships, and partnerships from private entities and development partners, subject to existing laws and regulations.

SECTION 17. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the NCCA, in coordination with relevant government agencies and stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 18. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 19. Repealing Clause. - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, and issuances inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 20. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,