

TutoK: A Mural of Artistic Collaboration. A Probe on Evolving Collective Creativity

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ABSTRACT

TutoK is an organization of artists. Recognizing the opportunities for discourse through art, TutoK has fostered artists' initiatives towards providing an avenue to exhibit its collective voice. It has, since its inception, tackled various causes like human rights violations, the current economic crisis, Philippine history and education or the lack thereof. It carried-out these issues in various forms: from well-received exhibitions to art events; from art forums to public murals. Using art as a conduit, advocacies were conveyed.

What began in 2005, as a gathering of artists and organizations to enact a visual response to the spate of extra-judicial killings in the Philippines, TutoK is still a refreshingly fruitful work-in-progress on artistic collaboration. Accessing the Philippines' rich communal art tradition, TutoK is able to harness artists and networks to build creative partnerships and espouse a collective message.

TutoK's focus is set by 20 artists that act as a collegial body. This core convenes and works as an organizational committee. We come from various persuasions; we volunteer our time, talent and energy. We are visual artists, writers, teachers, performance artists and cultural workers; each busy with our own art practice, vocation, individual commitments or exhibitions. It is from this multiplicity that we have conceptualized projects that have impacted the art scene in terms of participation, motivation and appreciation.

The potency of TutoK can be attributed to the following factors: respect for the creative process, a shared vision on art's possibilities, value for our peer's efforts, the ability to multi-task different roles and our own self-discovery. This paper will discuss the various projects we have undertaken and the steps involved to bring it to fruition. It will also probe on the collaborative exercise within the group, so as to appraise its assets and drawbacks in line with its current perspective.

Keywords: *TutoK, art, Philippine visual artists, artists' collective, artist run initiatives, collaboration*