

# A N I

A n n i e l l e   G a v i n o



**INTERDISCIPLINARY MOVEMENT ARTIST /  
ETHNOCHOREOLOGIST/ WRITER / CURATOR/  
CHOREOGRAPHER / EDUCATOR**

# ANNIELILLE

## "ANI

# GAVINO

Annielille Gavino is a Filipinx a physical theater & experimental movement artist, researcher, writer, maker, ethnochoreologist, and community organizer. She immigrated to the United States in 2000 with prior training in Philippine folk dance, theater and classic modern dance and ballet. Since then, Gavino's career has centered on cultural activism, perhaps inspired by her experiences working with legendary choreographers such as Katherine Dunham, Donald McKayle, Baba Chuck Davis, Eleo Pomare and many others. Her interests in cultural anthropology led her to field researches on the practice of classical Indian dance ( Bharatanatyam ) taught by Priti Patil of Apsaras, flamenco taught by Antonio Hidalgo Paz ( former Antonio Gades dancer ), Hula, West African, Tai chi, Orisha dances, Afro-Caribbean dances and many more. She has danced with international modern dance companies such as Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, and Kun Yang- Lin/ Dancers.



As an interdisciplinary dance maker, she uses dance as a storytelling element for cultural connection, resistance, spiritual journeys, and community engagement. Her choreographies which has manifested in a site-specific, community-driven, museum gallery curated performance to a documentary film and dance on film works have been supported by Dance Place, Painted Bride, Fleisher Art Memorial, Barnes Foundation, Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance, Small But Mighty Arts, Asian Arts Initiative, Philadelphia Asian Performing Arts, Asian Arts Initiative, Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival, Leeway Foundation, Velocity Fund, and Mapfund. Annielille is a dance writer for thINKing Dance, works as a teaching artist for the Kimmel Center in providing lecture on Jazz as social change movement. She also holds an MFA in Dance from Hollins University and a proud mother to daughter, Malaya.



**ANI/MALAYAWORKS**  
DECOLONIAL DANCE ACTIVISM

# MISSION STATEMENT

Ani/ Malayaworks engages in decolonial resistance work by using multidisciplinary performance and writing modalities to dismantle colonial practices and narrative.



*"Ang hindi marunong lumingon sa pinanggalingan, ay hindi makakarating sa paroroonan"*

*"Those who can't look back, cannot see the future"*

# PATAWILI



Traditionally, celebrated by the Tumandok people, an indigenous group from my island, Panay, "Patawili" is a communal gathering where members of the community help out with the farm work and then celebrate with a ritual of food, dance, and music. Inspired from this, "Patawili" recreates a new ritual in spaces celebrated by 1st, 1.5 and 2nd generation Filipino-Americans. (1st generation Filipino-Americans are those who grew up in the United States with Filipino born parent/s, or the 1st generation to immigrate to the United States. The term 1.5 refers to individuals who immigrate to the United States before or during their early teens. 2nd generation immigrants refer to the U.S.-born children of foreign-born parents.)

Patawili begins with Kamayan, a traditional ritual of villagers gathering and eating with their hands. With almost 100 audience members. The first workshop of this was held at Asian Arts Initiative's third-floor gallery, filling the space with a diverse population of cast and audience, all partaking in this Filipino ritual. What better way to sense the spirit but through ingesting its blessings? By beginning the celebration with a feast, Patawili allows every participant to ingest stories through these recipes. It allows the audience to be amongst the community and to view eating not merely as a physical act, but as a spiritual prayer.

This project was supported by Leeway Art for Social Change Grant and a residency micro grant by the Philadelphia Asian Performing Artist in partnership with the Asian Arts Initiative.



**Patawili is inspired by my daughter, a second generation Filipino American whose experiences are different from my own. This is a retelling of how she navigates America with her multiplicities as mixed race Filipino-American. In this picture, This work is my effort to teach her and other children of immigrants ancient spirituality through the only scripture that exists: folktales and myths.**

# Baybayin

Katutubong pamamaraan ng pagsulat ng mga Pilipino

In this Photo, Malaya instructed me to inscribe the ancient language, Baybayin. Using choreographic modes of inscription, I used my body to initiate movements, using my body to draw each character from the script on multidimensional space. I eventually forgot the language and fall in desperation.



In another iteration, I sang her the lullaby, *Sa Ugoy ng Duyan*, eventually forgetting the lyrics of the song and finishing with a statement of realization, "I can't remember."



The impetus for this installation work were interviews of Filipinx-Americans transcribed through this installation.

Many Filipinx-Americans expressed feeling lost or othered. I related this to a cultural amnesia, the loss of history and identity due to colonialism.

Thus, creating MISSING posters of Ancient Filipinx rulers, royalties and gods from pre-colonial pre-Philippines resemble the loss we experience now.



A Collaboration of Dance and Film by  
Ani Gavino and Jasmine Lynea

# HERstory

Honoring Matrilineal Societies



HERstory, is a conceptual dance theater merging the personal into the political context of feminism. It investigates matrilineal bloodlines and ancestry, prior to European monotheism. The work honors the mother as the creator, the "mana" ( life force ), the birthing power; contrary to the belief that the nurturer is parallel to the weak.

HERstory, inspired by matrilineal pre-colonial societies, demonstrated how goddesses were omnipresent in our spirituality. Films were created in this multidisciplinary performance with the collaboration of filmmaker, Jasmine Lynea.

Copyright - The Dance Journal: Celebrating Fierce Women at The Barnes' Artist Bash

<https://philadelphiadance.org/dancejournal/2018/09/22/celebrating-fierce-women-at-the-barnes-artist-bash/>

# HERstory



**"Though the work begins with the story of the collapse of her native Philippine matriarchal culture, she brings in black perspectives and other contemporary female stories."**

**- Julius Ferrero of ThINKing Dance**



HERstory Deconstructed (March 2018) is facilitated and choreographed by myself, in collaboration with Jasmine Lynea (on film). This is a process-based durational performance involving discourse, creative writing and improvisation (music jam, dance cypher, spoken word and story circles ). Gathering dancers, poets, singers at Fleisher Art Memorial, this experiential performance moved audiences literally from gallery spaces to the sanctuary, and emotionally through the stories shared on generational trauma, patriarchy, colonialism and #metoo movement. The mother-daughter dance section became a highlight as Gavino invited mothers and daughters to a dance, a commentary on her own frustrations on the Western patriarchal ideas of the bride. The performance ended in a ritual of signing permission slips allowing each attendee the permission for self-love and self healing.. Permission slips were given to each participant as part of the ritual.



Rob Li Photography



# De(scribing) Filipinx

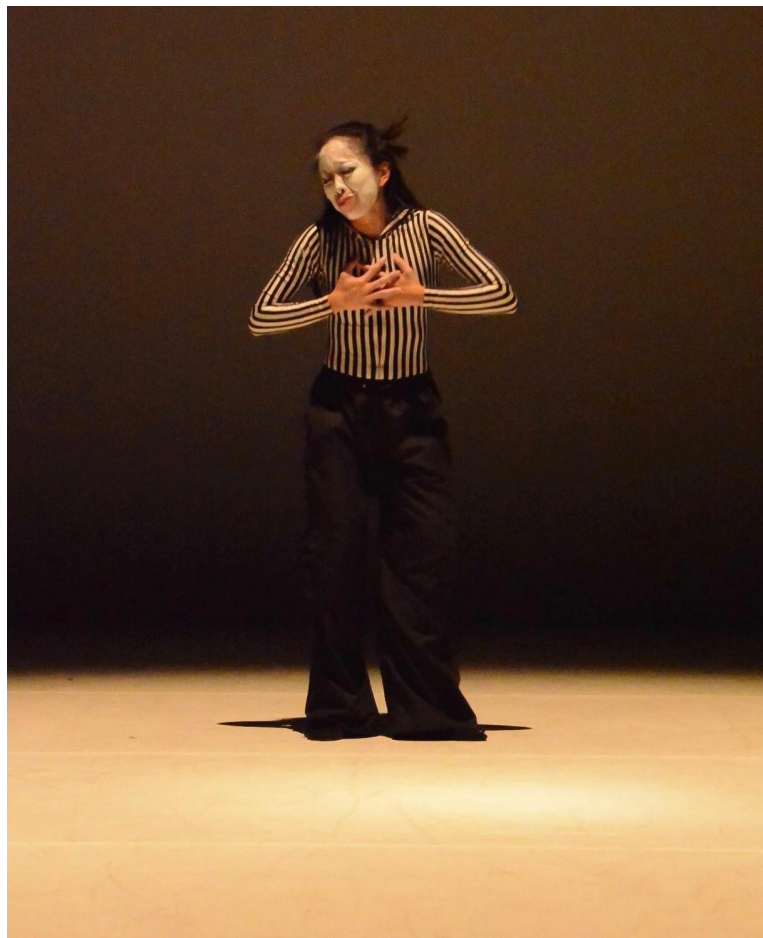
**De(scribing) Filipinx** a weaving of historical research with my personal memoirs (as a Filipinx immigrant turned 1st generation American and my mixed raced 2nd generation Filipinx- American daughter). This writing will be presented in a poly-disciplinary digital book. Screen dances, documentaries, drawings, soundscape, and photographs will be embedded after each chapter of this audio-visual book, giving a traditional static writing more interactive and engaging approach. This work is funded by Velocity Fund Grant.





# La Migra, Let's Run (Immigraphobia)

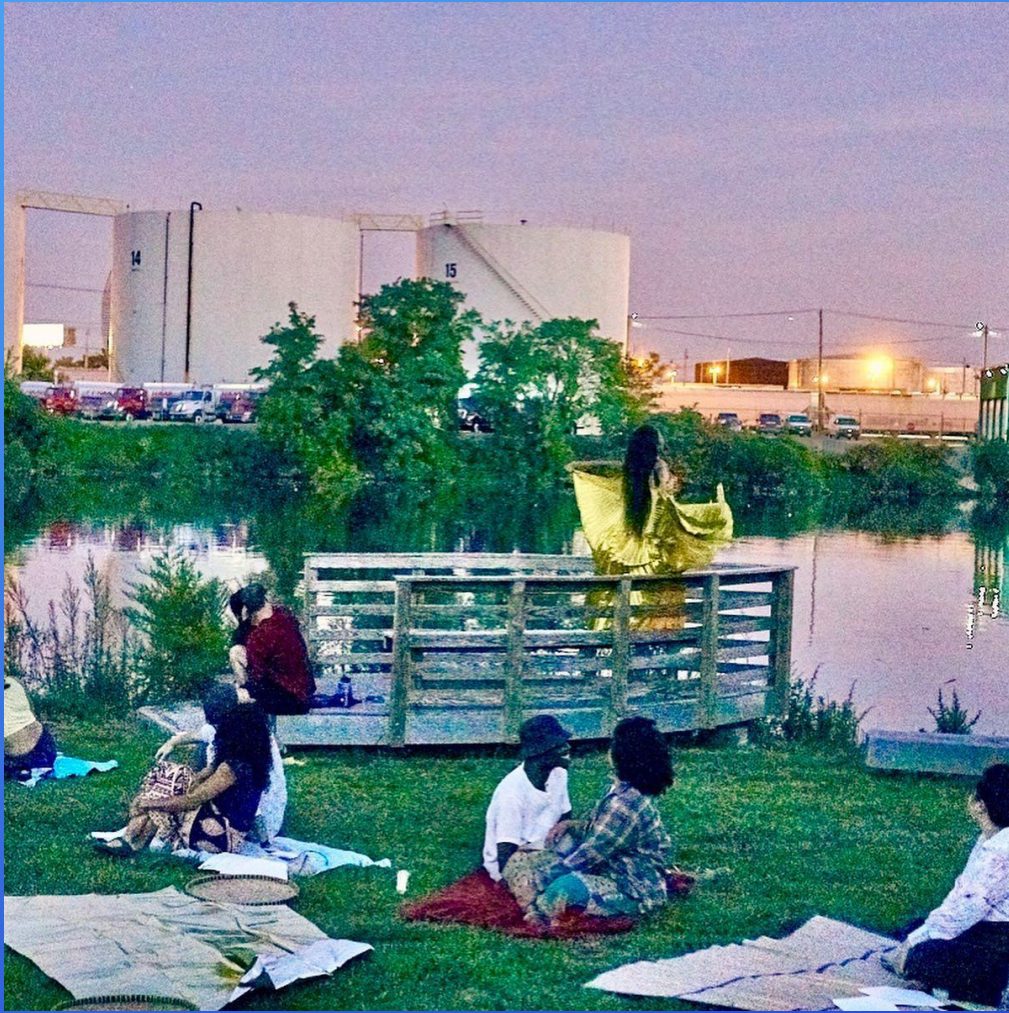
La Migra, Let's Run is a phrase often used when immigrants find themselves in close parameters with ICE ( Immigration and Customs Enforcement ).La Migra, Let's Run began as a commentary solo performance materializing the plight of an immigrant and their struggles. This speaks particularly on assimilation and cultural acculturation which often transpires in an immigrant's life. Bringing the personal to the political, this work is depicted from my personal experience as a Filipino immigrant in the USA. Drawing from my fear of unacceptance, deportation, and separation from my US-born Filipinx daughter, I created this solo resulting from the passing of SB1070, a 2010 legislative act that allowed state law enforcement officers to "lawfully" stop and arrest any suspected undocumented immigrant. This law also required immigrants older than 18 to possess any certificate of alien registration issued to him or her at all times. Racial profiling and anti-immigration sentiments heightened during these times. This new awareness of US laws led me to further research historical laws demonstrating nativism in US history, namely the Naturalization Act and the Asian Exclusion Act.





Playing on caricatures, I made statements portraying stereotypes as a method to present what white America sees in an immigrant. Using the symbolism of a mime, an art form that involves clowning, white makeup, and gestural storytelling, I used this modality to express the erasure of the immigrant's voice and portray the pressure to acculturate to whiteness. This was my statement on how immigrants of color have assimilated to white culture for the need of acceptance, opportunities, and even survival. This work was commissioned in several festivals in the United States from Washington DC's Dance Place to Bronx Academy of Dance New York.

# SUNSET CYPHER



Gavino's work has strong roots in community, and she drew heavily upon her cultural background in designing this experience."

<https://www.broadstreetreview.com/wnwn/sunset-cypher-celebrates-filipino-folklore-for-fringe#>



## **BIGHARI: the lost goddess of the rainbow**

**After reading the mestiza consciousness which Anzaldua introduced in her book plagued my mind. As I dug into my own history and considered our mixed identities as Filipinos due to colonialism, I asked, “isn't the Filipinx grappling with being in this place of nonbelonging and in-between ness as well? Therefore, is the Filipinx a mestiza?”**

**A reimagining of the Filipinx complex identity is reimagined through the embrace of our multiplicity resembled by our multiple colors of the rainbow.**

**Sunset CyPHER is based on a Filipino mythological folktale about the goddess of the rainbow, Bighari story was presented as part of the Philadelphia Fringe Festival, honoring the goddesses of our ancestral past. Through the mode of an immersive physical theater, I created an experiential performance engaging with the audience (my village) and the fading of the sun (nature god). Reimagining the past as a form of escapism and a coping method in re-envisioning a future that involved care and healing.**

# ***De(scribing) Maharlika***



***De(scribing) Maharlikha* provides an overview of pre-colonial Philippines through the lens of ancient spirituality. This work will draw attention to belief systems that inevitably influence the Filipino people's ancient practice of healing arts, agriculture and societal norms. The question that will drive this research is, "Who are we before we became Filipinos?" The current name, Philippines is derived from its colonizer, King Philip II, a long-dead Spanish monarch who symbolizes colonialism. There's been petitions to rename our country from Philippines to Maharlikha by the current Philippine administration, and many ask, why now?**



**What does *Maharlikha* mean to us? Maharlikha is a profound spiritual word that comes from the Sanskrit prefix maha (great) and the Indo-Malayan suffix likha, which means creation. Mahalikha is a kingdom that was said to comprise the Philippines, Brunei, South Borneo, Hawaii, Indonesia, Malaysia, Spratly Islands, and Sabah before becoming colonies of Europe, really and it is defined as “the great creation.”**

**Its existence remain a theory as evidence and documentation was not of importance before written history. For this reason, I will use Maharlikha as a symbol, an unknown number in a mathematical sequence, that represent oral stories told yet considered simply theory and/or myth.**

**Modern society questions the validity and accuracy of pre-colonial history. Unless inscribed, documented, cited, proved, then stories are not given the same weight of significance. This is particularly true when it comes to mythology, a word that came from the West. Before our practices completely vanish, before oral traditions are forgotten, I would like to describe and inscribe, *De(scribing) Maharlikha*.**

# DECOLONIZATION WORK

## CHANGING THE NARRATIVE AS CONTEMPORARY BODY PRACTICE

Film Screening  
& Movement discourse

AUG 5  
10:30-12:30 am EST

Register at:

[www.daloydancemovement.com](http://www.daloydancemovement.com)

IT'S JUNE. IT'S PRIDE MONTH.  
ITS PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE MONTH.  
ITS JUNETEENTH.  
ITS IMMIGRANT HERITAGE MONTH

## PATAWILI VIRTUAL PINOY+GUESTS POTLUCK

What does freedom mean to you?



JUNE 28 8 PM

IN LIEU OF ASIAN PACIFIC  
AMERICAN HERITAGE  
MONTH

## PATAWILI: A VIRTUAL PINOY DINNER

Join us in a roundtable  
discussion on Filipino- American  
history and experience.

Catch this on FB LIVE @AnnielilleGavino  
May 23 SATURDAY 8 PM



AUGUST 4 | 10:30 AM-12 EST

## CHOREOGRAPHING MEMORY AS A CONTEMPORARY BODY PRACTICE

Register at  
[www.daloydancecompany.com/ugnayan](http://www.daloydancecompany.com/ugnayan)



# ANI GAVINO

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<https://anchor.fm/annielille-g-gavino>