

The **National Museum of the Philippines** (Filipino: *Pambansang Museo ng Pilipinas*) is an umbrella government organization that oversees a number of national museums in the Philippines including ethnographic, anthropological, archaeological and visual arts collections. Since 1998, the National Museum has been the regulatory and enforcement agency of the Government of the Philippines in the restoring and safeguarding of important cultural properties, sites, and reservations throughout the Philippines.

The National Museum operates the National Museum of Fine Arts, National Museum of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, and National Planetarium, all located in the National Museum Complex in Manila. The institution also operates branch museums throughout the country.

History

The first predecessor to today's National Museum was the Insular Museum of Ethnology, Natural History, and Commerce under the Department of Public Instruction, created in 1901 by the Philippine Commission. In 1903, the Museum was subsequently transferred to the Department of Interior and renamed the Bureau of Ethnological Survey. This new bureau was responsible for the Philippine participation in the Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904. After the exposition, it was abolished as a separate bureau and renamed the Philippine Museum.

The museum's structure again changed in 1933 when the Philippine Legislature divided the museum. The museum's Division of Fine Arts and History went to the National Library. Its Division of Ethnology went to the Bureau of Science. Finally its Division of Anthropology, which included archaeology, ethnography and physical anthropology, and the other sections of natural history of the Bureau of Science, were organized into a National History Museum Division. This was transferred to the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce in 1939.

The Japanese occupation of the Philippines during World War II brought the divisions back under a single National Museum of the Philippines, but the museum lost a large part of its collection during the Liberation of Manila when the Old Legislative Building was destroyed by American artillery. The Legislative Building was immediately restored through the American funds bringing the museum back to its operations.



Historic Marker of the Philippine National Museum

The museum's role in cultural growth was recognized as contributing to government's desire for national development. In 1966, President Ferdinand Marcos signed Republic Act No. 4846 or the Cultural Properties and Protection Act. The law designated the museum as the lead agency in the protection and preservation of the nation's cultural properties through the conduct of census, study, and declaration of such properties and the monitoring and regulation of archaeological exploration, excavation, or diggings in historical or archaeological sites. With its new powers, it was able to strengthen its cultural mandate by declaring properties, structures, and sites of historical and cultural value to the nation. The educational mandate was strengthened because it was able to inform the public of the researches it conducted and through the acquisition and exhibition of archaeological finds.

In 2019, the powers of the National Museum was further expanded through Republic Act No. 11333 which was signed into law by President Rodrigo Duterte. Under the law the museum body's official name was lengthened to National Museum of the Philippines from just being National Museum. It was also classified as a government trust attached to the government for only budgetary reasons preserving a degree of independence and autonomy. It is also mandated to establish regional museums in each of the country's administrative regions.

Museums

National Museum of Fine Arts

Main article: National Museum of Fine Arts (Manila)



National Museum of Fine Arts

The National Museum of Fine Arts, formerly called the National Art Gallery, is housed in the old Legislative Building. The building was originally intended as a public library as proposed in Daniel Burnham's 1905 Plan for Manila. Designed by Ralph Harrington Doane, the American consulting architect of the Bureau of Public Works, and his assistant Antonio Toledo. Construction of the building began in 1918 and completed in 1921.

The façade of the building had classical features using stylized Corinthian columns, ornamentation and Renaissance inspired sculptural forms. Upon the establishment of the Commonwealth government, it was decided that the building would also house the Legislature and revisions were made by Juan Arellano, supervising architect of the Bureau of Public Works.

On July 16, 1926, the building was formally inaugurated. During the World War II, the building was heavily damaged, though built to be earthquake resistant. After the war, it was rebuilt albeit less ornate and less detailed. During the Martial Law era, the Legislative Building was closed down. Today, the building holds the country's National Art Gallery, natural sciences and other support divisions.

National Museum of Anthropology

Main article: National Museum of Anthropology (Manila)

National Museum of Anthropology

The National Museum of Anthropology, formerly known as the Museum of the Filipino People, is a component museum of the National Museum of the Philippines that houses the Archaeology Division, Ethnology Division, Exhibition, Editorial and Media Production Services Division (EEMPSD), Maritime and Underwater Cultural Heritage Division (MUCHD), and Museum Services Division (MSD). It is located in the Agrifina Circle, Rizal Park, Manila across the main National Museum building which is the National Museum for Fine Arts. The building was the former headquarters of the Department of Finance.

National Museum of Natural History

Main article: National Museum of Natural History (Manila)



The National Museum of Natural History

It was recently announced that the third building of this museum complex — the one presently occupied by the Department of Tourism, shall be developed into the National Museum of Natural History, once the Department moves out and transfers to its permanent location in Makati. The National Museum of Natural History will have a hexagonal DNA tower structure in its center which will be the base for the ventilating roof-dome of the whole building. Living trees will also be planted within the interior of the building. It was expected to be finished in the last quarter of 2015 but the opening of the museum was moved sometime in 2017. In October 2017, the National Museum of Natural History officially opened to the public with its iconic Tree of Life structure.

National Planetarium

Main article: National Planetarium (Manila)



National Planetarium

The Planetarium was planned in 1970's by former National Museum Director Godofredo Alcasid Sr. with the assistance of Mr. Maximo P. Sacro Jr. of the Philippine Weather bureau and one of the founders of the Philippine Astronomical Society.

The building started on construction on 1974 and completed 9 months after. It was formally inaugurated on October 8, 1975. The Presidential Decree No. 804-A, issued on September 30, 1975, affirmed the Planetarium's status. The Planetarium is located between the Japanese Garden and the Chinese Garden at the Rizal Park.

Regional Museums



Butuan National Museum



Sugbu (Cebu) National Museum



Zamboanga National Museum

The National Museum has also established numerous regional museums outside Metro Manila. These regional museums are found in Angono (Rizal province), Padre Burgos in Vigan (Ilocos Sur), Kabayan (Benguet), Kiangan (Ifugao), Magsingal (Ilocos Sur), Puerto Princesa (Palawan), Butuan in Caraga region, Tabaco (Albay), Fort Pilar in Zamboanga City, Boac (Marinduque), and Jolo (Sulu). In 2018, regional branches in Basco in Batanes and Iloilo city in Iloilo province were established. A regional branch in Cebu is being developed, while a branch in Bolinao (Pangasinan) was permanently closed. Branches in Banton town in Romblon, Romblon town in Romblon, Monreal town in Ticao Island, Maitum in west Sarangani, Jolo in Sulu, Marawi city in Lanao del Sur, Guian in Eastern Samar, Davao city in the Davao region, Mati in Davao Oriental, Cabanatuan city in Nueva Ecija, Tabuk in Kalinga, Aparri in Cagayan province, Malaybalay in Bukidnon, Cotabato city in Maguindanao, Hungduan in Ifugao, Rizal town in Palawan, Bulalacao in Mindoro, and Siquijor town in Siquijor are also being eyed by the National Museum. The re-establishment of a regional museum in Bolinao is also being eyed.

Other notable buildings

The National Museum hosts its Western Visayas (Region-6) Regional Museum in the former Iloilo Rehabilitation Center, a jail facility that was abandoned in 2006 when the inmates were transferred to the new BJMP location. Built in 1911, the old Iloilo Provincial

Jail is an Important Cultural Property - a recognition of its exceptional cultural, artistic, and historical significance to the Philippines. NMP also runs a satellite office for Western Visayas at the Old Jaro Municipal Hall, a designated heritage site, in Iloilo City which was designed by architect Juan Arellano.

Seminars and lectures

The National Museum offers numerous lectures, workshops, and seminars annually. However, most of these events happen at the museums within Metro Manila. More than 80% of provinces in the country have yet to possess a museum under the authority of the National Museum. A partial reason for this lacking is the non-existence of a Department of Culture. In late 2016, a bill establishing the Department of Culture and the Arts and another bill strengthening the National Museum, including its regional museums, were filed by Senator Loren Legarda in the Senate. Both bills were formally introduced in early 2017.