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[Excerpt]

**Mal Tayag** *it was just important to have a more in-depth perspective from people from different communities. And to also delve a little bit deeper into certain topics that maybe we didn't before, or that people are curious about...like, somebody who is mixed-Indigenous and Filipinx, somebody who is a part of the black community, but also a part of the Filipinx community...things like that. And so those were really important for us.*

[Intro music]

## Interno // Ep 1: Sari-Sari

### **Mariam Arcilla**

You're listening to Interno, a time capsule that profiles artists who are recalibrating their internal lives and perspectives of home, longing, and connection adjacent to the global pandemic.

Presented through podcast episodes, Interno explores some of the ideas that amplify artistic value and social duty in times of flux. These conversations will also consider what a post-pandemic future may look like, so that we can continue to move together towards brightness. I'm your host, Mariam Arcilla, and I've created Interno on the unceded Lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. Interno is made possible with support from the Institute of Modern Art in Australia. Each episode is accompanied by transcripts and reading notes, which you can find on the website [MakingArt.Work](#).

My first guest is Sari-Sari, a creative collective based in New York City that supports creatives and innovators from the Philippines diaspora, which we'll refer to as Filipinx people — which will be explained in this episode later on. In Tagalog, 'sari sari' means variety. And in the Philippines, sari-sari stores are family-run convenience shops attached to the front of houses. They usually have this mixed bag DIY operation. Here, you can find anything from candy and cooking oil to shampoo sachets and prepaid mobile phones. As a collective, Sari-Sari produces exploratory content, community projects, and a BIPOC marketplace. And most recently, they launched a quarantine-themed publication that connects Filipinx people around the world. Today I'm speaking with Sari-Sari directors Marielle Sales and Gabriella Mozo in New York City, and Mal Tayag, who is presently in Canada.

In this episode, we talk about shared identities, the power of language, and solidarity with our BIPOC communities. We also discuss how we can approach social justice through the rubric of creativity and activism. A warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander listeners are advised that this episode contains the name of deceased people.

### **Mariam Arcilla**

Marielle, Gabi, and Mal, thanks for joining us today.

### **Mal Tayag**

Hey!

### **Gabriella Mozo**

Happy to be the first guest.

### **Mariam Arcilla**

## Interno // Ep 1: Sari-Sari

So under the Sari-Sari banner, you recently launched your third issue of KAPWA, a publication championing Filipinx creativity around the world. This felt like a connective gel for many of us who were embroiled in the thickness of social distancing and lockdown. 'Kapwa' is a Tagalog term that translates to 'shared identity', 'equality' and 'being with others'. And it's this inclusive term that you're hoping to encapsulate with Sari-Sari. Gabi, it was you who first came across this word 'kapwa'. How did that come about?

### **Gabriella Mozo**

I was reading this book, actually, that's on the Filipino-American psychology, which breaks down all of the pillars of Filipino culture. And one of the pillars is 'kapwa' which is 'shared identity', but when you kind of read the definition, you understand what it is already: Filipinos are always around to help each other, and I think that's so much about our community. And what we wanted to do was create a modern interpretation within the creative community of like, how we can come together — all of us, wherever we come from, whether it's from the Philippines, in the US, from wherever in the diaspora — how we can come together and still have a shared identity, even though we don't really know each other.

### **Mariam Arcilla**

Yeah this vision of a shared identity definitely vibrates through the latest KAPWA issue, which you have aptly themed 'Quarantine' and features 60 Filipinx contributors like BJ Pascual, Kino, Puno Dostres, Lugao, and Maaari to name a few. These people work across diverse fields and are based around the world, including Tokyo, Makati, Toronto, Pennsylvania, Los Angeles. How did you corral this group together for the magazine?

### **Mal Tayag**

That was a lot of Marielle's doing. So we give props to her. She's kind of magical in that way in being able to garner a lot of people and get them together. And in curating, it was definitely a group effort in suggesting people, and I guess, going back in the Rolodex of people who we may have archived or wanted to work with. But really, Marielle did an amazing job with just garnering all of these people and asking them to get content and to contribute to this physical being of KAPWA that we put together, because it is coming out in a print issue, but then we also did a (digital version) for donations to Pagasa (Philippines-based charity), as well.

### **Mariam Arcilla**

And I found out about KAPWA through that digital version actually, because I saw Instagram posts about it through two Filipinx designers. And it's marvelous to discover this new wave of Filipinx people who are creating this sense of connection

during quarantine, because we inherently are a nation that really commits our lives to service and inclusivity. And you know, we may not always say “mahal kita” or “i love you” orally, but we show it through cooking for people and inviting strangers into our homes and singing to our family and mothering our society. And I feel that this sense of shared identity and generosity is captured in the publication. Mal, was this something that you recognised early on when you were putting KAPWA together?

**Mal Tayag**

Yeah, I remember when Marielle had started sharing all of the content that she was gathering from the interviews and stuff that she had done, and texting the group chat, and being like, “Oh my god, these interviews, I can't wait for people to read them”. Because they were all so connected and different as well, like diverse in the sentiments that they were feeling at those times. But for the longer interviews that I did, it was just important to have sort of a more in-depth perspective from people from different communities. And to also delve a little bit deeper into certain topics that maybe we didn't before or that people are curious about. So like, somebody who is mixed-Indigenous and Filipinx, somebody who is a part of the black community, but also a part of the Filipinx community, things like that. And so those were really important for us. And they're always things that we think about whenever we're creating content, and we continue to grow and learn. But we always want to make sure that we are being as inclusive as we can and open to being called out if people see that we're not being that. And just including as many voices as we can that fall under the umbrella of the Filipinx diaspora.

**Mariam Arcilla**

Now, Marielle, you and Gabi started Sari-Sari initially as a pop-up store. Can you talk about the impetus behind this?

**Marielle Sales**

I was looking for, like, a community here in New York, especially in the creative industry, but I feel like it was hard to find it. In other places, like where my friends were living in Toronto, I feel like they had such a close-knit creative community. And other cultures also were starting to form these collectives around their heritage. And I feel like that was missing in New York, especially for Filipinos and creatives. Me and Gabi, we've known each other since we were 19 from New Jersey. And you know, we just met each other through like other Filipinos, actually. We formed Sari-Sari in 2018 — it just came about randomly because she had a clothing line, it was vintage. And she wanted to do a pop-up and I just wanted to do something creative. So we combined our pop-up for one day, but just leading up to the pop-up, we were deciding what to call it. And since everyone who was involved were Filipino, we were like, “Oh, we should call it Sari-Sari.” And then from there just became like this

project which made us kind of put our heads into the space of what it means to be Filipino and growing up here in America.

**Mariam Arcilla**

And Mal, you joined Sari-Sari a year later. How did that come about?

**Mal Tayag**

I'm from Canada, actually, so I am the newest member of Sari-Sari — now Sari-Sari Studio. I met Gabi and Marielle in...was that only last year? That was only last year, I think, 2019. But we haven't known each other for very long. At that time, they were Sari-Sari New York. They were doing a bunch of events and I had heard about them through a friend actually, Camille. She introduced us. We ended up getting along; we went for Filipino food. And then when I returned back to New York, we just started having more conversations and realised we align so much just in terms of our values, what we want to do for the community. And then I wanted to help out in any way that I could just in terms of business development, because that is my background.

So my background is in business development, business strategy, but also in fashion and creative. I have a business called schema, which is an agency, and also we're launching soon, a directory for women of colour creatives: women, fems, binary, and trans creatives of colour. With Sari-Sari, I think that, with all of us, it's just kind of all-hands-on-deck. We are officially a business, very newly officially a business. So it's a lot about figuring out as well and navigating what each of our skills are, and trying to put all of that together because we all do have such different skills, but they all marry so beautifully together. So I feel like our values align, our skills are very diverse. And in that way we're able to create so much so quickly.

**Marielle Sales**

It was an organic journey of like friends just wanting to come together and do something. And then yeah, it just formed and grew.

**Mariam Arcilla**

And it did grow from there. You ran a crowdfunding campaign in February 2020 to raise funds for publications, videos, and an online shop. How did you call upon the community to help bankroll this next phase.

**Gabriella Mozo**

Over the past couple of years, we did gain a platform and in order to kind of build our brand and our community. We wanted to gain some kind of monetary funds because of course, to do all these things, we need money to be able to expand.

**Mal Tayag**

And at that time, we had just become, like, officially a business. And in order to really execute all these plans that we wanted to execute, we did need monetary funds. And I think that's something that a lot of people forget when they see these movements or these platforms on Instagram or on social media; they're like, "Oh, cool, they're doing all these things". But behind the scenes, it's all in our free time. And so in order to kind of shift us from being sort of this thing that we work on on the side to potentially something that is full-time in the future — and that we can dedicate all of our time to and help expand — that needs a little bit of a backing. And we wanted to go the community route first before we saw any, I guess, corporate investment to see what we can pull from our community... and actually our crowdfunding campaign is frozen right now because — or it's on freeze, it's on pause — because of, well, [what's happening in] the world and I'm sure we'll talk about that. But there's a lot going on. And at the time when we launched, it was right at the beginning of, kind of, this very extreme unraveling of a lot of things. So yeah, we'll continue that when the time is right. But we didn't want to take away from what's going on right now.

**Mariam Arcilla**

Speaking of what's happening right now, Mal, I was struck by this interview you did in KAPWA with Lugao, an artist based in Mindoro Islands in the Philippines, and NYC. Lugao said, "I feel that there is a global awakening happening right now, where people are realising they don't have to compromise their happiness for profit. We can create a sustainable future which is in alignment with the laws of nature and caters to a natural state of being, which is joy." Which is just, you know, it encapsulates pretty much everything we're seeing right now with efforts to dismantle capitalism. And I feel like people are waking up with COVID aftermath around the world because coronavirus is — as much as it is a public health crisis — is an unmasking of the real pandemic which is racial discrimination and socio-political disharmony, and the growing gap between rich and poor. And perhaps coronavirus was a symptom that had to expose all of these things. So maybe tackling this head on could bring us closer to a more joyful and kinder world. So my next question, I guess, would be since Gabi and Marielle, you're in North America, and Mal you're in Canada: what is the energy right now, where you are, and what kind of awakening is happening? Starting with Gabi...

**Gabriella Mozo**

I've been protesting a few days now probably three or four times just because I live near Barclays center and everything is kind of organised around that area. And it's really interesting, the narrative that the media gives versus what's actually going on. And, like the things that I'm seeing are just...it's so beautiful to see people come together honestly. And seeing such a really diverse group of people just standing for

one thing. And it's so emotional, you know? It's just so hard not to tear up when you see it or talk about it. It's really beautiful.

I went to a protest yesterday at Grand Army Plaza, and it was led by a Haitian group, and they were leading the protests with Haitian drums and dancing. And it was just... it was so moving. So like, when I see the news, and I see how disconnected it is, I'm like, you realise how dangerous...how dangerous the media is and how it's just not saying the truth. Because I've been living here and I see what's going on. And yes, there's looting. And yes, things were happening in the beginning of the protests. But every protest that I've been in — I protested probably four, four times, like walking, marching — it's all just people coming together and we all just believe in the same thing. So I don't really know where the disconnect comes from. I don't know how it is in BC?

### **Mal Tayag**

In Vancouver, yeah, I feel like whenever people ask me this, I'm like it's the same but different, because the same issues are still present here. But there's obviously hundreds and hundreds of pent-up anger that has been brewing within the States. And Canada is a much younger country. So there's a lot more history there just with African-Americans with black folx and their community in the States. So I think that in that way, there are differences. But here, people are still protesting and it's been a beautiful kind of butterfly effect that has come from the protests and from the uprising that is happening in the States right now because it has. And you see it in the news, though like Gabi says sometimes that news is very skewed from the actual essence of what's going on. But you do... you see it in the news, how there are protests happening all over the world now in the fight for black lives. And that is so important because all all discrimination all racism is rooted in anti-blackness and in colonial mentality in like the disruption of Indigenous lives.

And so, unless black people are free, none of us are free. So it's just something that is super important. So here protests happen, they're very, very peaceful, at least in Vancouver, led by black folx. Really incredible energy. I went to one the other day, and it's just really, really great to see how this movement is extending this purpose to communities that weren't a part of it before. Because I feel like before during protests and stuff like that you would always see the same people, you would kind of be stuck in this echo chamber of people who were in the activist space. But now you're seeing so many more people come out. And I think that that's such a great thing to see is that, okay people are really starting to open up their eyes to the realities of this world, and not being stuck in their own fake reality that they've been living in for their whole lives.

**Mariam Arcilla**

Yeah and I think that right now we're seeing social media play a crucial role as well in unraveling that reality, I think, with people calling themselves out or educating others about their moral compass. We're seeing brands and institutions and museums really owning up to the fact that they need to have more black employees and more Indigenous-led programs and BIPOC leadership and equity, and you can really tell who's staying silent and who is being complicit, which is equal to being racist, really. And those who are actually stepping up and making grand changes in the way that they make reparations with the black community in mind. And I think that is such a powerful thing that I haven't really seen before.

In terms of protesting in Australia, we attended a protest here in Sydney over the weekend for Indigenous deaths in custody in solidarity with George Floyd. And like you were saying, Gabi, the mainstream media has been twisting things around here as well and focusing on people who defy the strict social distancing rules that are in place. In Australia, you're not allowed to go over a certain number of people in restaurants or funerals or weddings — and all of a sudden, you know, tens of thousands of people are out in the streets protesting in cities like Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. And I think what the [mainstream] media don't understand is that people are risking their lives and healths to go outside and protest for what they believe is right, which is human justice, and at a very granular level, basically stop killing Indigenous people.

I was watching the Q&A program last night, and it's a current affair program in Australia, with Nakkiah Lui, who is an Aboriginal writer, as a guest. And she talked about how her parents are immunocompromised. And at first she felt concern for them because of the health impacts of protesting. But at the end of the day, it was an easy answer for the parents because they are fighting for their lives. The fear of corona fades when you know what you are truly fighting for when you step outside that door. So yeah, the public health crisis is racism. And you know, here in Australia, we have our own stories too. David Dungay died in police custody in 2015. He was the same age as George Floyd. He said, "I can't breathe" the same way and in as many times as Floyd did, with the same shaking tenor. He was one of over 430 Indigenous deaths in custody and not a single...not a single conviction. So we're dealing with it here too. You know it's a global issue when we see something like Floyd and Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery because it is our problem as well. So how have you been using the Sari-Sari platform to spread awareness with what's happening right now over there with Black Lives Matters? And how can we show solidarity especially amongst among Asian-American allies and Asian-Australian allies?

**Mal Tayag**

We've had these discussions, whether it was individually within our own homes or between each other about racial disparities and different levels of discrimination. And we all do our own work to educate ourselves as to how we can be better people in this world, because we all need to be working towards that. But it was important for us to say something, and in saying something calling out our own community, because we've said in multiple [Instagram] posts that it is not our job to educate on anti-racism because we're not black or Indigenous. We shouldn't be profiting off of that education, however, it is our duty as Filipinas or as Filipinx folx, to be calling out the errors in our communities' ways. And in that, it was just important for us to say it very bluntly: "If you can't accept the fact that Asians can be racist, why?" "Why is it that you can't at least believe somebody else's pain and experience and speak up for that and stand with them?" I think there is a lot of colonial mentality that is present within our communities because of our history with colonisation. And there's also a lot inherently with that, a lot of anti-blackness, but it's a lot of stuff that we are too scared to call out or too uncomfortable to call out.

But we have to ask ourselves the question: if our comfort is more important than lives? Because literally, that is what we're saying if we don't do anything. So we know that we have a platform, we know that we don't do things perfectly all the time, which is why I even said earlier, we are so open to feedback, because we also don't know that specific experience: none of us are black or Indigenous, so we can ever speak to that. So we're always open to listening and hearing what those folx have to say, and moving from that because they know best. And so if it isn't coming from our community, or if it isn't coming from our own experiences, and we have to listen from others. But it was just important. It was important at that time. It's important now. It was important before that. And we are all in different stages of unlearning these white capitalist patriarchal mentalities that we've been raised with. And through that unlearning and learning of new things, it's been such a powerful, frustrating, painful, but also a liberating experience. And we only hope that more people, and that in us talking about it, we're exposing our community to that experience too.

**Mariam Arcilla**

How about you, Gabi?

**Gabriella Mozo**

I think it's calling people out in your personal life and not only your family, but people at work too. Calling out your employer or calling out people directly that are related to you, not in a way to cancel them or not in a way to completely vilify them, but just in order to learn and to create this dialogue and in order to be like, "Hey, when you said this, this and this, this is how it could be perceived, or this is how it's wrong, or this is

## Interno // Ep 1: Sari-Sari

the history behind it. That's why this is not what you should be saying." And like, I think the more you have these conversations — and it's been uncomfortable for me for sure. Like it's really hard to get these words out because I don't necessarily have the language or I'm not necessarily informed myself to know what to say — but the more you do it, and the more you say it, I think it becomes more comfortable. And that's what we really have to start doing. And that's the hardest part.

[Interlude music]

### **Mariam Arcilla**

One thing I've been curious about is the various ways that people from the Philippines are able to maintain a strong national identity and sense of culture and tradition, wherever we are in the world. You know, we're known as the diasporic nation; there's like over 10 million of us living abroad. So what are the ways that you've been able to retain your culture, personally and professionally?

### **Gabriella Mozo**

I think like in the past few years, especially with us starting Sari-Sari, we really have dug into our culture a lot more than I have in my past, especially in my high school years or college years. But now I really try to cook a lot of Filipino food and I call my parents a lot so that they can help me with the recipes. And recently, I started taking Filipino class, or I have a tutor now, a Tagalog tutor. So I take that like twice a week. I was never really fluent ever. I only really understand a bit. So I feel like now is a great time for me to, especially during quarantine, have another hobby and really learn more about it.

### **Marielle Sales**

I grew up speaking Tagalog because my parents just spoke it at home. So I feel like I've always been connected with my culture through that. And through I guess the way they raised me, they wanted me to like grow up Filipino. But at the same time, living in America I just wanted to fit in with everyone else, and I kind of hid my Filipino side for the longest time until pretty recently, I guess, like in my 20s, when I started seeing more and more people embracing their own cultures. I was like, being Filipino is something that's a part of me and I can't really escape it. And I just wanted to... I think it was like a missing piece to who I am and my identity. And also as an artist and photographer, I've always wanted to explore more about my culture, but I felt like I was just trying to fit into the Asian-American term.

### **Mariam Arcilla**

Mmm I relate to what you mean, Marielle. I went to school in Quezon City and I remember my school teacher told us we'd never get good jobs if we keep speaking Tagalog as an adult and that we needed to make English our main language. And so

## Interno // Ep 1: Sari-Sari

she set up this penalty jar in class, and every time we answered a question or asked a teacher about something in Tagalog, she'd force us to put our lunch money in the penalty jar as punishment. Which is weird because she wasn't even our English teacher. I think she was a Science teacher or something. And so from there, we just had to condition ourselves as kids to keep speaking English. And I eventually phased out my Tagalog tongue when I moved to Australia in 1996 because I just wanted to fit in as an Asian-Australian. And I grew up to become a writer, but I can't write much Tagalog now, and I can only understand one of every five words that my Lola (Grandmother) says, and that comes with being educated in a whitewash system where you're told to shun your own language. And I'm trying to relearn Tagalog now.

### **Gabriella Mozo**

Right yeah, well if you need a good tutor, I have one if you ever want to brush up (laughs).

### **Mariam Arcilla**

Are they online?

### **Gabriella Mozo**

Yeah it's on Preply, not to like plug them but... (laughs)

### **Mal Tayag**

No, plug them, plug them (laughs)

### **Mariam Arcilla**

How about you Marielle?

### **Marielle Sales**

I love 'tabo', which is...I don't know how to say it in English, you know. I was trying to search like 'tabo' today, like, because I need one (laughs) but I don't know where to get it.

### **Mariam Arcilla**

Ah yeah, 'tabo', that small pail you use in the bathroom.

### **Marielle Sales**

Yes. It's like a manual bidet.

**Mal Tayag**

Oh my God, that's exactly what I was gonna say. But it's just funny, those things just trickle down and we don't even realise that that's a part of our culture. And yet almost every Filipinx person can identify with growing up and seeing, in the bathroom or under the sink in the cupboard, having a 'tabo' there whether you used it or not. It was just...there (laughs).

**Mariam Arcilla**

Yeah, 'tabo' in the corner of the bathroom haunting you (laughs). My funniest Tagalog word that I love is 'gigil'. Have you heard of that? Yeah, I feel it captures all Filipinx emotion of just, you know, squeezing somebody who you love soooo much, and you have tremendous adoration for, and so you pinch them so much that it kind of hurts? And that whole 'gigil' energy of being from the Filipinx and squeezing the passion out of life is why I love that word so much. And Mal, what's your favorite Tagalog word?

**Mal Tayag**

I guess, like one of my favorite ones that kind of helped me understand a little bit more about Filipino culture was 'kapwa', honestly, because I didn't realise that at the root of the Indigenous Filipinx culture was this idea of 'kapwa'. And just through the years, things have gotten a little bit skewed in terms of what that means to the actual people. But that really helped me just realise that 'Okay, we're about community. We are about being better together and not apart. We are about supporting each other.' And so that was one that I really, really liked. And yeah I think that's mine.

**Gabriella Mozo**

I know what mine is. I learned from our friends who have this brand called Maaari — Ivy and Jeanette — so we collabed on a tote: it was three women and on the bottom of [the tote] it said 'kababaihan'. And I didn't know this word before, but it's the role of women in the Philippines and Filipino culture, which is predominantly a matriarchal culture, pre-colonial or pre-Spanish. So, I mean, it's something that I always knew but didn't know it was actually a term, because my family is very much matriarchal [laughs]. And I think we can kind of all identify with that for sure.

**Mariam Arcilla**

Well, speaking of self-identity, I wanted to talk about something for the moment, the term 'Filipinx', because some of my older relatives in the Philippines are confused about what this label means. And it's a great way to actually open up this conversation today because we all follow the same Facebook group '[Subtle Filipino](#)'

Traits'. There was a post recently where there is debate about the term 'Filipinx' that attracted 1400 comments.

### **Mal Tayag**

We had something similar happen [with Sari-Sari], yeah...

### **Marielle Sales**

We posted in 'Subtle Filipino Traits' on Facebook this article that we shot for HYPEBAE, and it's title was 'Filipinx beauty' [[What Beauty Means to the Filipinx-American Community](#)] and then I posted it just to share, you know? But then, like people just overlooked the whole article and just like focused in on the 'x' and was like, "What is Filipinx?" And then that's when the whole debate happened...

### **Mal Tayag**

(Laughs) Sorry, I'm not laughing to be insensitive of the term, just laughing because we didn't expect that kind of like an uproar for the term because it was in the title of the article. And I just want to preface with saying we're discussing this term, but none of us here are non-binary folx so they should be leading this conversation — because we use that term to show our solidarity with them. So we're touching on this, but I do want to acknowledge that if there is an unraveling of this term and a further deeper discussion, it should be them that are leading that discussion, not us, per se. But to touch on that incident, we did not expect for however many comments to come up.

What's been interesting as from an observational standpoint is that a lot of people who have grown up in North America, so in Canada or in in the USA, or who are active in activist circles have been fully on board with that term, and they understand the relevance of it, the purpose of it, why we use it, which is to show our solidarity with non-binary and gender non-conforming folx. So that is an alternative that we've seen, and then we've seen that a lot of people who are Philippine natives who were born in the Philippines, and potentially they moved over to the Americas or they're still living there. They have this really hard difficulty in accepting the term. Because we get the argument that the word 'Filipino' is non-gendered already. But then we question that because we're like, but people use 'Filipina' and 'Filipino,' so I think the modern iterations of the word are actually gendered. However, the Indigenous word, I'm sure was not, which I'm not 100% sure, so don't don't quote me on that. But the way that the language has changed has now revealed it to be gendered, and so we use the 'x' to show our solidarity. But that is like a hot topic, for sure, in any space. Even in our recent Instagram posts, that's also been commented on. And personally when I saw that, I was like, you're taking away from what the purpose of this post, which is to focus on black lives right now; this is not to have an argument on this

term right now. But yeah, it's interesting (laughs) because it's definitely a point of discussion for us.

**Mariam Arcilla**

I mean, you are right, Filipino is a gendered term. It's a masculine term, but it's also a term that's rooted in Spanish colonialist era, when we were named Filipinos by the Spanish settlers. So historically, we didn't even identify as Filipino, or it's not at least how we would have described ourselves through our Indigenous ancestors, the Aetas. Many people will say the Philippines is an Americanised term. And, you know, not being non-binary myself — I identify as a cis person — I want to show solidarity too with the LGBTQI community by saying 'Filipinx' because we want to offer a platform where we can recalibrate the way that we address each other through an inclusive lens. But I also can see how frustrating it is for some, because feminists have fought so hard to make sure that we incorporate 'Filipina' into the vocabulary. So yeah, I think it's a personal thing if people want to use 'Filipinx' or 'Filipino' or 'Filipina', 'Pinoy' or 'Pinay', but it is interesting that it's become a point of conversation when you just want to shoot an actual message through, and then that term becomes embroiled in white noise.

**Mal Tayag**

Yeah, and you said it perfectly, it's a personal thing. Like, if I use the term Filipinx and you don't, how does that harm you? And I think that that's something that people get very caught up in is this entitlement of trying to be their way all the time. And it's like, everybody has the rights to view who they want to be, to use the pronouns that they want to. It doesn't harm another person, depending on what you choose to use. And so that's what just always frustrates me when those kinds of conversations come up [laughs].

**Mariam Arcilla**

Speaking of conversations, you also run a YouTube Tagalog learning series called 'Drunk Tagalog'. Can you tell us more about this and how drunk did y'all actually get?

**Mal Tayag**

I don't think we...we didn't get too drunk....Well, did we? (laughs) We were working that day. It all happened very, very quickly. We had talked about wanting to do some kind of show that had to do with learning Tagalog because none of us can speak it fluently. I know very, very little Tagalog. My parents didn't speak at my household, so all I knew were the remnants of things that I would hear from relatives when I was at my Titas' (Aunties) or Titos' (Uncles) houses. So we wanted to create something that was fun and not too, I guess, academic-heavy, and a little bit more relaxed, and that included laughs. And so we had met Fraunchi who was one of the hosts, and JV last

year, I believe in 2019, and just really enjoyed their personalities. And we were like, "Hey, do you want to host something for us, because the ways that you interact, the ways that you just are so funny," and that kind of merged with this idea of 'Drunk Tagalog' And Aleli — who's our producer for that show, who is based in New York as well — she was a huge, huge help in just corralling everybody together. So the first four episodes that we did were very last minute and happened very, very quickly. But the result of it was just so much fun. And the response was really great from people. They were like, "Oh my god, it's so funny and I'm learning!" And that was really the purpose of what we wanted to create. So that's how that came about. And then we made a game with it as well, and obviously with COVID right now, nothing can really push forward with that because we can't go into production for any filming stuff. So we're just sitting on that for now. And when will the tools right afterward if it feels right afterwards?

### **Mariam Arcilla**

I suppose you could do Zoom happy hour 'Drunk Tagalog'?

### **Mal Tayag**

We did, we did at the very beginning, yeah at the very beginning of COVID. At the very beginning of quarantine, actually, we just had these huge Zoom calls with like 30-40 people and we'd play 'Drunk Tagalog' again. The hosts would come on and just kind of question people who are in the Zoom chat. So that was really fun too.

### **Mariam Arcilla**

So now that we're sort of exiting this post-pandemic post-quarantine era, and after the things we've discussed today, I want to end this episode by asking each of you about your vision for a new world at the other side of this. Will it be revolutionary, hyperaware, sustainable? What do you want the future to look like based on what is happening today?

### **Gabriella Mozo**

We all have had a lot of time in quarantine to reflect and think about how we can do better and what actions we actually need to take. So I hope when people start coming out of quarantine that people actually take the actions that need to happen, and actually mobilise and do things that need to be done that have needed to be done for hundreds of years.

### **Marielle Sales**

Before we even, I think, start jumping on the movement, we need to fix what's happening inside. Personally, I'm also looking at everything from my lens as a Filipina-American, and how this has always existed within our culture. It's been

ingrained in us: the colorism, the racism, the anti-blackness. It could be just subconsciously, but it's about recognising it and finding ways to move forward.

**Mal Tayag**

I was listening to this [Instagram] LIVE with [Amanda Seales](#) and a friend of hers the other day on her IG, and she's a black woman. They were talking about this revolution that's happening right now. And they were both saying how this isn't a stop. Like after this happens, something revolutionary isn't going to happen and fix everything. This is merely a comma in the story that is to continue. And I thought that that was really beautiful because, as much as there's a lot going on right now, and it is so important that whatever we are doing to dismantle the white supremacist patriarchy, and everything that we are doing to unlearn our racist tendencies, and relearn how to read, and learn how to be better. We need to continue those things and it's a lifelong process.

So I think that a post-pandemic world, ideally, is going to look like one where people continue to have these awakenings and level up their consciousness and continue to learn more and more. Because we never know everything, and I think that we can continue to be curious and just continue to grow. And as long as we're doing that, we are doing our part, because we can't — it's not just like, we'll do this one thing and we're redeemed for all of the things that we've done in the past. We have to continuously work to dismantle the system, because that is what it's about is we have grown up in this system that has continuously demeaned black and Indigenous and people of colour. And so we have to work towards liberating that. But I hope that's what it looks like. And it's interesting, you also talk about sustainability, because sustainability is so much also a part of Indigenous culture. And so even in decolonising our minds we are also becoming more mindful of environmental sustainability. So I think it's just all so connected. And so we just need to continue learning and we're not going to get it right every time. We're going to keep having to make mistakes, but we just learn from those. We're all in this together. Kapwa.

**Mariam Arcilla**

Mal, Gabi and Marielle, thanks for being our first guest on Interno.

**Marielle Sales**

Thanks for having us.

**Mariam Arcilla**

I'd like to end this episode with a poem called 'A Small Needful Fact' by the African-American author Ross Gay, which was published in the [The Quarry: A Social](#)

Justice Poetry Database in Washington, DC in 2015. And it continues to remain urgent:

***A Small Needful Fact***

*Is that Eric Garner worked  
for some time for the Parks and Rec.  
Horticultural Department, which means,  
perhaps, that with his very large hands,  
perhaps, in all likelihood,  
he put gently into the earth  
some plants which, most likely,  
some of them, in all likelihood,  
continue to grow, continue  
to do what such plants do, like house  
and feed small and necessary creatures,  
like being pleasant to touch and smell,  
like converting sunlight  
into food, like making it easier  
for us to breathe.*

Interno is produced by myself, Mariam Arcilla, as part of the Making Art Work initiative. Thanks for listening.

[Outro music]

**END OF TRANSCRIPT**

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**READING LIST / RESOURCES**

**Black and Asian-American Feminist Solidarities: A Reading List**

**BLACK LIVES MATTER**

## **Interno // Ep 1: Sari-Sari**

**Anti-racism resources for white people**

**JUNK TERROR BILL NOW!**

**#blacklivesmatter**

### **AUSTRALIA READING LIST / RESOURCES**

**First Nations Resource Directory**

**Racism: It Stops With Me ~ Education Resources**

**Pay the Rent**

**Deaths inside: how we track Indigenous deaths in custody and why we do it**

### **ABOUT SARI-SARI STUDIO**

**Sari-Sari Studio / Sari-Sari General Store**

**Sari-Sari Studio (@sarisaristudio) • Instagram photos and videos**

**KAPWA: Quarantine**

### **CREDITS**

#### **Interno episode 2**

*Guests*

**Sari-Sari Studio**

**Gabriella Mozo** - Apparel Designer, Illustrator,  
Co-founder of Sari Sari Studio

**Marielle Sales** - Digital Strategist, Photographer,  
Co-founder of Sari Sari Studio

**Mal Tayag** - Entrepreneur, Creative Director,  
Business Strategist

*Producer & Host*

**Mariam Arcilla**

*Soundtrack music*

**'Step Inside' by Paper Plane Project**

*Commissioned for*

**Making Art Work, Institute of Modern Art, June 2020**

**All images courtesy of Sari-Sari Studio**