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Duelo: A Choreographed Synthesis of Filipino Martial Arts and Cultural Dance

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This study presents Duelo, a choreographic work that synthesizes Arnis, the Philippines' national martial art, with traditional Filipino dance motifs to portray a layered narrative of courtship, conflict, and cultural identity. Framed within a practice-based research methodology, the composition integrates the twelve basic Arnis striking techniques into folk-inspired movement vocabularies. These are arranged across six choreographic figures: The Grace of Fierceness, A Warrior's Charm, The Courtship, Duelo, Striking Techniques, and Combo Finale. Each segment demonstrates martial elements such as kumintang hand gestures, triangular formations, cartwheels, forward rolls, and warrior stances, emphasizing both narrative fluidity and combat precision. The creative process involved collaborative movement generation, reflective journaling, and audience feedback, supporting the thematic development of each sequence. Beyond its artistic function, Duelo offers a cultural and pedagogical tool for promoting Filipino values such as bravery, honor, and love while presenting a dynamic model for integrating martial heritage into physical education and MAPEH curricula. The study argues that hybridized performance forms like Duelo can serve as impactful vehicles for cultural preservation, curriculum enrichment, and the sustainability of indigenous knowledge systems, especially within Southeast Asian academic and community settings.

Keywords: Arnis, Filipino martial arts, cultural dance, practice-as-research, performance studies, Southeast Asian arts

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