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## **Nineteenth Century Manila, by Joaquin and Santiago**

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1987 issue of *The Independent*, and comments on the assassination attempt on Nemesio Prudente, President of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. This piece contains a stern warning for government that continues to hold in these sobering times:

. . . the clockwork image holds true even unto the powers that be. In their case it is that of a clock striking closer and closer to the appointed hour—of failure and public exasperation. . . Time is running out on all of us and it is getting increasingly more difficult to hold back the hands on that clock. (p. 140)

This latest anthology of Salanga's works is aptly titled. It is indeed a very personal chronicle—the writer's as well as ours, for the times he lived in and wrote about are ours too. History, in books as well as in reality, is always both past and present intertwined.

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NINETEENTH CENTURY MANILA: THE WORLD OF DAMIAN DOMINGO. By Nick Joaquin and Luciano P.R. Santiago. Manila: Metropolitan Museum of Manila, 1990. 151 pages, illus.

The book was "published on the occasion of the exhibition of Damian Domingo Paintings from the Paulino Que Collection, February 12–23, 1990, Metropolitan Museum of Manila." One might think, then, that it is a catalogue of the exhibit. But it is not. If it is, then it lacks the standard technical data one expects in an art catalogue: medium, dimensions, provenance. Rather, it is a text that has long begged to be written but had to find an auspicious occasion for its launching. And what better occasion than the exhibition of Domingo's watercolors, recently repatriated to the Philippines.

Damian Domingo (1790–ca. 1832) was the first Filipino painter to leave us a self-portrait, as he was the first Filipino to open an art academy in Tondo. He was the bright light of Philippine painting of the early nineteenth century, known for his fine portrait miniatures, usually on ivory, his religious paintings, and for his *tipos del pais*, illustrated volumes depicting Filipinos in their daily attire of varied hues and shapes, an art genre which he single-handedly created. Domingo was born in Tondo, probably on 27 September of *criollo* parentage. He married Lucia Casas, a *mestiza de sangley*, and built for her a house on Calle Real, opposite the theater of Tondo. In 1821, Domingo set up a private art school in his spacious residence. Then in 1823, the Real Sociedad Economica de Amigos del Pais inaugurated the first Philippine Art Academy and in 1827 appointed Domingo professor of painting. Domingo's association with the Sociedad Economica brought him in contact with Raphael Daniel Baboom, a cloth manufacturer and merchant, who collected samples of Phil-

ippine costumes. As these costumes were perishable, Baboom sought out Domingo to render them in watercolor. From this collaboration come the paintings reproduced in the present volume on Damian Domingo.

Domingo came to the attention of the museum public when some of his religious works were displayed in a retrospective (ca. 1982) on Philippine masters. Then a descendant of Domingo, Stephen Ongpin, published a monograph on his paintings and drawings, *Filipino Master, Damian Domingo* (1983). If Damian Domingo has already been the subject of scholarly study, what does the present volume add to our knowledge? A lot.

Luciano P.R. Santiago's introductory essay "The Art and Ideas of Damian Domingo" presents an updated biography of the artist based on the works of Miguel Zaragosa and Carlos Quirino and, the author is too modest to admit, some original sleuthing he has done in the Philippine National Archives, the Archives of the Archdiocese of Manila, and elsewhere. The essay also tries to solve the riddle of Domingo's own style, which is not quite academic but not folksy either. Santiago proposes that Domingo learned his art not from having studied in the "mother country"; his talent was homegrown, as his religious paintings resemble seventeenth-century Spanish masters rather than the ones being churned out by the academies in Europe.

Part III of the book, "The World of Damian Domingo," by Nick Joaquin presents Domingo's age as truly revolutionary. In a revisionist essay, Joaquin proposes that the activism of the 1890's was the fruit of the mutinies of the 1790's and the early 1800's when ideas from the French Enlightenment first entered the Philippines. The world of Domingo was one of growing wealth, wealth which created in the half-castes and *indios* a sense that they were equal to the Spaniards. Joaquin's essay sets Domingo's art in the context of an urbanizing and cosmopolitan Philippines.

Part II of the book, which is its heart, contains thirty plates from a *tipos del pais* album given to Grace Douglas by her father in 1833 as a souvenir of the Philippines. This is the real treasure in the book. Competently reproduced in full color, the plates, about the same size as the originals, are a feast for the eyes. Here are Filipinos of various walks of life dressed in their colorful best or in their equally colorful daily wear. Joaquin's comments, which accompany each plate, are always informative, but they do repeat themselves. And one wonders where Joaquin got his information on the materials used for each of the costumes. This probably came from the pencil notations found in the album, although Joaquin does not make it clear that this is so.

Appended to the book, beginning page 99, is a tedious translation into Filipino by Reuel Aguila of the texts for Parts I, II, and III.

All told, this volume is a useful and informative addition to the growing number of books on Philippine Art. Its full color reproduction of Domingo's works demonstrates the level of sophistication Philippine art books have achieved.

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