DAMIAN DOMINGO (b.Tondo, Manila 1800, d. Manila, 1834)

Videodescription:

In the late eighteenth century, fine art in the Philippines was in its infancy. One Filipino painter set a new standard, opening the first art school and becoming director of the first official art academy in the country. He raised painting from a mere technical craft to an art form worthy of study and recognition.

His surviving body of work is small but tantalizing. A few portrait miniatures. A handful of religious paintings. Three albums of colorful Filipiniana costumes. But what do we know about the man behind the art? Due to a lack of archival records, the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century is a period typically glossed over by historians.

"Damián Domingo: Primer Pintor Filipino" is a short documentary tribute to the life of a pioneering Filipino artist whose work will be a rich source of study for years to come. The video contains interviews with Luciano P.R. Santiago, researcher and author of The Life, Art, and Times of Damián Domingo, the first full-length biography of a Filipino master before Luna or Hidalgo; Jeremy Barns, director of the National Museum; Lisa Ongpin Periquet, a direct descendant of Damián Domingo as part of the Ongpin family; and Purissima Benitez Johannot, former director of the Ayala Museum.

Below ref:  http://www.geringerart.com/bios/domingo.html

Damian Domingo is remembered as the first Filipino painter to specialize in secular (non-religious) painting. He had a photographic memory, and is well known as the creator of miniature portraits of Manila society figures.

According to his will of 1831, Damian B. Domingo was the son of Domingo Macario and Erminigildia Gabriela. The fact that his parent's names are those of Christian saints, instead of a Christian name with a Spanish or Filipino surname suggests that they were Chinese immigrants who were converted to Christianity, or perhaps the children of Chinese immigrants who could not claim an important Chinese surname. Claims that Domingo had Spanish noble blood have been discounted over time.

Damian Domingo married a woman named Lucia Casas, who was a beauty from a wealthy family. They had 10 children, two of whom died in infancy. Two of his sons -- Severo and Jose -- also became painters.

Domingo established his reputation as an artist by painting exquisitely lifelike miniatures on ivory. By 1821 he already had a large following that he had to open his house to his trainees. On 2 Dec 1823, the Sociedad Economica de Amigos de Pais formalized his workshop into the Academia de Dibujo y Pintura. His appointment as Professor was confirmed on 13 Jun, 1826. On 9 Apr 1829, he gave the first examinations in that school. A remarkable aspect of the Academy was that it abolished racial discrimination, giving Spaniards, Mestizos and Filipinos equal standing and privileges.

Sometime in the mid 1820s, Domingo must have met Rafael Daniel Baboom, a Catholic Indian merchant from Madras, who traded in silk. Baboom engaged Damian to paint albums of costumes to depict the fashions and occupations of the various citizens of the Philippines. Damian executed several of those albums. Six of these are known. One was destroyed by fire during WWII, while the album at the Newberry Library is the only one that Damian signed on all the constituting plates individually.
When painting miniatures Domingo used five Chinese sable brushes, some equipped with just one bristle.

Only four easel paintings are certainly by him: the "Nuestra Senora del Rosario dando El Santisimo Rosario al Santo Domingo 11 Santa Catalina," (Our Lady of the Rosary Giving the Most Holy Rosary to Saint Dominic and Saint Catherine), ca 1815; "La Sagrada Familia," (The Holy Family), ca 1830; "La Catedra de San Pedro," (The Seat of Saint Peter), ca 1825; and "La Inmaculada Concepcion," (The Immaculate Conception). The first three are in the possession of his descendants, the last is in the Xavier University Folk life Museum and Archives. All these pieces are done in fine miniaturistic technique.

Damian's self-portrait on ivory exists, his Sinitic origins evident in his eyes. He died in Manila at the age of 40.