

PAINTING AND RELATED FORMS

Painting may be classified as a two-dimensional art form, which includes any form of artistic expression done on a flat surface and with a suitable instrument. Images may be created on a surface by applying pigment on a treated surface usually by means of a brush, palette knife, spray gun, fingers, or a combination of these methods.

As early as the 16th century, Filipino and Chinese artisans were being taught by the friars to paint sacred images for use in worship. Wood and cloth were used as support for painting, and a fine layer of gesso may have been laid to create a smooth surface. Metal sheets and even ivory were used later in the 19th century. The Chinese brush was probably used for many of these paintings, as shown by the soft passages on the canvas.

Some of the more common contemporary materials for painting and two-dimensional works are tempera, fresco, watercolor or aquarelle (which may be opaque, as in gouache and poster color, or transparent), ink, oil, acrylic, pastel, crayon, pencil, graphite, and charcoal. Common painting surfaces are wood or panel, masonite, canvas, paper, and cardboard; the surface may be primed or treated with a layer of gesso or latex paint and glue. A contemporary technique in two-dimensional art is the collage (from French “coller,” to paste). Another popular medium is painting directly with textile paints.

Themes. Philippine painting can be classified according to the subjects or themes it has had over the centuries: religious paintings, historical paintings, portraits, nudes, genres, interiors, landscapes, seascapes, and still lifes.

Statues of saints and engravings from Europe were used as models for religious paintings. It was common to portray a favorite saint complete with a wooden stand and a pair of curtains flanking it. Well into the 19th century religious painting stressed correct iconography rather than realistic rendering of a theme.

Religious painting could depict a lone image, as in Justiniano Asuncion's painting of the *Virgen de la Paz y Buenviaje* (Virgin of Peace and Good Voyage) and the *San Cristobal* (Saint Christopher) by Jose Dans, or scenes from Sacred Scripture and the lives of the saints. Common themes of painting based on scripture are the *belen* or Nativity scenes depicting the Holy Family, angels, animals, and shepherds, and the *Via Crucis* or Stations of the Cross, 14 tableaux depicting the suffering and death of Jesus hung in churches. Large-scale *Via Crucis* depicted by Bohol artists were displayed in Visayan churches, and those by Tagalog artists were displayed in Luzon. Some of the *Via Crucis* are still found in the churches for which they were commissioned, as can be seen in the Morong Church in Rizal and the Pakil Church in Laguna. Others are in private

collections or museums, as the Via Crucis from the Paete Church in Laguna and from an unknown Bohol church in the San Agustin Museum. Other paintings depicted catechetical lessons, as in a mural attributed to Jose Dans in the Paete Church, depicting heaven, hell, and purgatory. A popular type of painting for home altars depicted the death of San Jose, the patron of a happy death.

Religious subjects for decorating churches and homes continued to be popular well into the 19th century. Earlier paintings made by friar-trained artists depicted human figures in a manner reminiscent of Byzantine icons, where figures are rendered frontally and flatly and where perspective did not strive for realism but for symbolism; 19th-century paintings tended to be more and more academically correct as local artists were influenced by local or foreign art academies.

By the 19th century, secular painting began to slowly replace religious painting. The secularization of art, connected with the emergence of the middle class as the new patrons of art, introduced or popularized a number of forms: the historical painting, portrait, nude, genre, interior, landscape, seascape, and still life.

In the European academies, **historical paintings** consisted of large-scale compositions of human figures depicting a scene from history, the Bible, Graeco-Roman scenes, or an allegory. These paintings were intended to strengthen the moral fiber of a nation; thus they often contained a lesson or praised national values, like courage, steadfastness, generosity, and patriotism. Historical paintings also extolled the virtues of great persons, real or legendary. Such paintings were done after careful study, with the artist making numerous sketches from posed models and refining the drawings more and more. Often a number of compositional studies were done in pencil, then in watercolor or oil, the latter known as *bocetos*. Some bocetos were so refined that they could stand as works of art themselves. Historical paintings, which formed the standard curriculum of the academies, flourished when Filipino artists were sent as pensionados (government scholars) to study in the European academies. Foremost painters of history are Juan Luna and Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo. Luna's ***Spoliarium***, 1884; ***El pacto de Sangre*** (Blood Compact) 1885, ***Peuples et Rois*** (Peoples and Kings) 1892, and ***La Muerte de Cleopatra*** (Death of Cleopatra) 1881, belong to this genre; as do Hidalgo's ***Las Virgenes Cristianas Expuestas al Populacho*** (Christian Virgins Exposed to the Populace), 1884, and ***El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante*** (The Assassination of Governor Bustamante). Following in this tradition are Fernando C. Amorsolo and Carlos V. Francisco aka Botong Francisco. The genre painter Amorsolo was also known for painting scenes from Philippine history, like the First Mass, of which he painted many versions. Muralist Francisco created huge narrative canvases that brought together many scenes from history as in his ***Filipino Struggles Through History***, 1963, which shows the whole panorama of Manila's history, from the palisade of Rajah Soliman who stands tall in the first set of scenes to the end of American rule proclaimed at the Luneta. Painted in three panels, the mural is found in the Katipunan Hall of the Manila City Hall.

A **portrait** is any work whose subject is one or more particular individuals. A portrait often seeks to capture the basic physical likeness of the subject and to show insight into his/her essential character or psychological makeup.

From earliest times portraits have fulfilled different functions: as a record of a person's physical appearance, as a souvenir of a loved one or an ancestor, as a status symbol, as a model image of a leader or prominent social personality for public edification. Before the advent of photography, the portrait fulfilled the camera's function of recording and preserving a person's physical likeness, but portraiture as an art has always transcended mere likeness and showed artistic insight into the subject's personality.

Portraits are often done with the subjects sitting for several sessions, or they may be drawn from memory. A realistic portrait is one which truthfully shows the subject as he or she really is, including all individualizing features and characteristics, moles and warts, as well as physical defects. In contrast to this, a portrait may idealize or flatter the subject as more beautiful or attractive than in real life. A classical portrait, for instance, overlooks defects and irons out wrinkles to convey the idea of transcendence and immortality. Such a portrait also conveys formality and social importance. Official portraits hung on the walls of public buildings are often done in this manner. An impressionist portrait, on the other hand, has a casual approach to the subject shown at a particular moment in time, making a fleeting smile or transitional gesture. Other paintings may be done in the cubist or expressionist style which does not so much seek to capture physical likeness as character or state of mind and feeling.

With the secularization of art in 19th-century Philippines, portraits as a separate genre appeared, although for some time the only portraits made were of Spanish officials and church dignitaries, such as those done by Juan Arceo. The opening of the Philippines to international trade in the mid-19th century and the development of export-crop agriculture resulted in the rise of a local merchant class which, with social and educational advancement, was called *ilustrado*. This emergent class commissioned portraits to celebrate its social ascendancy. *Miniaturismo* (miniaturism) is a term applied to the technique of "limning" used by 19th-century artists, in which a very fine brush was used for outlining and bringing out minute details. The artist demonstrated his skill in sharply rendering the details of costume-intricate embroidery on fine transparent cloth, jewelry, and personal accessories, like the fan and handkerchief.

Well-known portraitists found patrons among the elite not only in Manila but in the provinces as well. Their painstaking recording of material detail answered the elite's desire to display its status. Among these artists were Simon Flores y de la Rosa who spent his years in Pampanga painting for churches and the rich, Justiniano Asuncion, Antonio Malantic, Isidro Arceo, and Dionisio de Castro. Masterpieces of 19th-century portraiture include Flores' portrait of the

Familia Quiason; de Castro's *Soterania Puzon de Quintos y Ventanilla*, Malantic's portraits of *Soledad Francia* and *Inocencia Francia*, and Asuncion's *Romana Carillo*.

Expatriate artists Luna and Hidalgo, who won distinctions at the Madrid Exposition of 1884, were themselves eminent portraitists. Having trained in Europe, they did not fall under the local miniaturist school but worked under two influences: the classicism of the academy; and modernizing trends, such as impressionism of the period. Luna did three kinds of portraits: the formal, the informal, and the boceto. Along with his *Governor General Ramon Blanco*, the series he made of his family when he came back from Europe counts among his formal works. Among these are *Nena y Tinita* (Nena and Tinita) in somber tones and *Una Bulaqueña* (A Lass from Bulacan). Of his informal portraits, the best known is *Chula*, a woman with cropped hair wearing a mantilla and leaning forward in solicitation. His formal portraits, rich in psychological insight, were of people, particularly women whom he met casually on the street. His oil sketches were spontaneous exercises done at the spur of the moment to capture a mood or a fleeting gesture. Among these were those of his young son Andres and his sleeping wife, together with his other works *Una Franchuta* (A French Woman) and *El borracho* (The Drunkard). Hidalgo also did formal portraits, like the one of Felipe Agoncillo which is formal yet vivacious. His *Chula* is elegant but more subdued compared with Luna's.

During the American period, Amorsolo was the portraitist par excellence of public figures, American colonial officials and prominent Filipinos who commissioned him to do their portraits. His counterpart in sculpture was Guillermo Tolentino who did busts and whole figures. Not to be overlooked is Fabian de la Rosa who did a number of outstanding portraits, among them, one of Pura Villanueva-Kalaw. Other notable portraitists were Jorge Pineda and Irineo Miranda.

Of the early modernists, Victorio Edades did a number of portraits throughout his career. Vicente Manansala did a few notable ones, and so did Francisco, particularly his portrait of Alejandro Roces. Federico Aguilar Alcuaz, Emilio Aguilar Cruz, Danilo Dalena, and Romulo Galicano have also done important portraits. Among younger artists who have excelled in portraiture are Antipas Delotavo, Renato Habulan, and Rafael del Casal.

A common subject of Western art, beginning with the Classical period, was the nude in which the subject is the unclothed human figure, male or female. In the Greek classical period, circa 500 BC, the sculptor Polycleitos systematized the nude figure in his canons which laid down what he believed were the ideal proportions, i.e., seven and a half heads to the figure. Furthermore, he introduced the idea of organic form, of the body revolving around its axis with all parts in coordination. The tradition of the nude continued through the Renaissance in the 15th century to 19th century neoclassicism, baroque, and romanticism. With the advent of modernism, the classical canons were challenged by realism,

expressionism, and subsequent styles.

In the Philippines the nude, as a subject of painting, was hardly found before the 20th century. The santo was often clothed, although a few exceptions were the Santo Niño, cherubs and angels, and depictions of Adam and Eve. The nude came to its own in the 19th century, when artists, like Luna and Hidalgo, schooled in the tenets of the European academies, used the human figure as the subject of historical and mythical anecdotes. Hidalgo's *La barca de Aqueronte* (Charon's Boat) writhes with the nude figures of the damned. Luna's *Odalisque* and Hidalgo's *Artista y modelo* (The Artist and his Model) use the undraped female as the focus of the works. In the 20th century, Guillermo Tolentino followed classical form in his *Mariang Makiling*. Nudes in painting have been associated with mythological figures, such as Malakas at Maganda (Strong and Beautiful). Amorsolo's nudes often represented precolonial *babaylan* or shamans making offerings to the gods, although he is better known for the *dalagang bukid* or country maiden bathing in the river. Nude drawing and painting from life had been an academic exercise in figure studies at the University of the Philippines (UP) School of Fine Arts since its early years during the American Colonial Period.

Today, most nudes are painted in media other than oil, such as charcoal, watercolor, and pastel, in a wide variety of figurative styles, some verging on the abstract. Galleries provide venues and models for nude painting sessions. Vicente Manansala, Cesar Legaspi, Jose Joya, Alfredo Roces, Solomon Saprid, Romulo Olazo, and Phillip Victor have painted numerous nudes. In general, nudes celebrate the female form or express the spirit through material form.

Genre, whose subject depicts people in everyday activities, became popular in the Philippines beginning in the 19th century. Genre in Europe flourished in Holland in the 17th century, with its lively secular baroque, and also in Spain where they were called bodegones, under such masters as Diego Velasquez. Genre is often full of movement and a sense of community life and collective activity. The changing subjects of genre reflect social and historical developments.

The first genre paintings developed from the *tipos del pais* or types of inhabitants of the islands—which were paintings in oil, tempera, or watercolor of men and women as types representing different social classes, occupations, and costumes. The earliest tipos were those of the *Boxer Codex*, circa 1590, which had colored drawings of *naturales* or the native inhabitants of the different regions in their typical attire, such as the Visayans, the Aeta, the Cagayan, and the Tagalog. Similar tipos del pais were the illustrations of vendors, public officials, Chinese residents, friars, and cockfighters by Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay to embellish the 1734 map commissioned by the Jesuit Pedro Murillo Velarde. These tipos were often painted from an anthropological perspective, as exemplified by those made in the scientific Malaspina expedition of 1795 which sent naturalists, scientists, and artists to the Philippines to know of its resources, flora and fauna, and its

inhabitants. In the 19th century it was Damian Domingo who amply contributed to the form with his several watercolor albums of the inhabitants of the islands in their representative costumes. Among the many drawings are *Una India Ollera de Pasig* (A Pot Vendor from Pasig), *Una Mestiza de Manila Vestida de Gala* (A Mestiza from Manila in Her Sunday Best), *Una Mujer Pangasinan Lavandera* (A Washerwoman of Pangasinan), and *Una India Viuda Vestida de Duelo* (A Native Widow in Mourning Clothes).

Jose Lozano's *letras y figuras* (letters and figures), in which the letters of the patron's name are spelled out by human figures, contains various tipos del pais of different classes and occupations executed in minute detail as in miniatures; an example is the work *Francisco de Yriarte*. Later albums of inhabitants in their costumes were done by Jose Ma. Asuncion, one of the early directors of the UP School of Fine Arts. An impetus to the tipos del pais was also seen in the drawings and lithographic prints of foreign visiting artists, such as Carl Johann Karuth, C. W. Andrews, and Thomas Barker.

When the tipos were contextualized within the natural environment and social setting, genre painting began. Among the first painters of genre were Lorenzo Guerrero with his ambulant vendors, and Simon Flores with his quiet domestic scenes, such as a mother teaching her young daughter to read or a woman feeding chickens in a yard, circa 1890. Luna and Hidalgo in their more personal paintings also moved towards genre.

Genre painting grew in importance in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, helped by the numerous drawings and engravings of foreign visitors such as C.W. Andrews and Joseph Anton Koch. Artists were encouraged to look around and observe the folk as they went about their daily occupations. Genre contributed an important self-reflective quality to Philippine art, one which raised the question of national identity in a colonial era. De la Rosa portrayed the ilustrado setting in *Kundiman* which shows a young woman singing, accompanied on the piano, before admiring guests.

The high point of genre was reached in the paintings of the Amorsolo school. Amorsolo's *Rice Planting* heralded the golden age of Philippine genre. In the 1930s the dominant visual form was rural genre depicting the cycle of planting and harvesting. Based in the UP School of Fine Arts, the Amorsolo school which, aside from Amorsolo, included Jorge Pineda, Irineo Miranda, Dominador Castañeda, Teodoro Buenaventura, Toribio Herrera, and Amorsolo's brother Pablo, contributed significantly to the development of genre in idyllic scenes of the countryside and its people.

With the development of modernism in the postwar years, new painters of genre, such as Manansala, Legaspi, Anita Magsaysay-Ho, Romeo Tabuena, and Ricarte Purugganan, discovered many new subjects in the postwar scene, such as jeepneys, barong-barong or shanty, *sari-sari* or variety stores, vendors of candles,

flowers, and all kinds of ware. Fiestas also became a popular genre subject, as in Mauro Malang Santos' paintings. Angono-based Francisco dealt with folk traditions in ritual and dance.

At present, there are several directions in genre painting. One is folk genre, primarily exemplified by the Angono artists of which Jose Blanco, with his family, is a leading figure. Nemesio Miranda Jr. aka Nemiranda, Salvador Juban, and others also do paintings that reflect their immersion in the life of the folk. Their style may be realist or may show the influence of Francisco in the strong sense of design. Another trend of genre derives from Manansala's style of transparent cubism. The subjects, whether folk or urban, are generalized types rather than specific individuals, as in the works of Malang, Angelito Antonio, and Manuel Baldemor. The third trend is folk-naive, drawing its inspiration from children's art with its spontaneity and color, as in the work of Antonio Austria, with its refined color combinations; Mario Parial, with his unique figurative style; and Norma Belleza, with her intense colors and vigorous structure.

Closely related to genre is the painting of domestic interiors, such as the inside of a sala or a room of a house or the hall of a building. An interior, first of all, shows the disposition of space inside a house and how it relates with the outside by means of doors and windows. Much of the interest of interiors comes from the furnishings of the house, the types of furniture, and the various ornaments within. It is obvious that an interior reveals social class in the kind of house portrayed, particularly with respect to its materials—whether strong and permanent, or light and fragile—and in its furnishings and decorations. An interior also reveals the kind of people who live in it—their interests, tastes, and temperaments. Tonal values are important in interiors because they create a dialogue between the shadowed interiors and the bright outdoors, as well as convey atmosphere and mood. Luna's ***Tampuhan*** is partly genre, partly interior, as the two personages are in the living room of a *bahay na bato* or stone house. Lozano's *letras y figuras* of ***Balvino Mauricio*** show in several sections the interior of a handsome 19th-century villa. Contemporary artists who excel in interiors are Romulo Galicano and Sofronio Y. Mendoza aka SYM who both did a number in a fresh, impressionist style, capturing the grace and casualness of present-day houses with some traditional features, such as *capiz* windows, screens, and *gallinera* (long carved benches).

In contrast to interiors is **landscape painting**, which often depicts natural scenery and the countryside, although there are also cityscapes or urban scenes. In general, landscapes may be realist, romantic, classical, or expressionist. The subjects of realist landscapes are actual and specific places with their distinct features. They are often done on the spot and thus often have as title the name of an actual place. Romantic landscapes are picturesque, mysterious, exotic, or awe inspiring with a suggestion of the divine spirit in nature. Romantic landscapes are also subjective, expressive of inner mood, with nature viewed through the reflecting lens of the emotions. Classical landscapes are studio pieces often

following formulas of ideal proportion and conveying the qualities of balance, harmony, serenity, and permanence in nature. Expressionist landscapes may use distortion and clashing colors to convey strong emotions.

In the Philippines, landscape painting began in the mid-19th century with the secularization of art and the emergence of the ilustrado as the new patrons of art. Some of the early landscapes were done in the Academia de Dibujo y Pintura. Hidalgo did his first landscapes in the school. They were shady landscapes of deep perspective showing a countryside with lush vegetation and a nipa hut beside a winding river. In Europe, Hidalgo did more landscapes of a romantic mood combined with an impressionist concern for delicate atmospheric effects and changing hues of the sky at different times of the day. Luna did landscapes of the many places he visited, such as the Normandy countryside; the Brittany coast and the Japanese rural scene, influenced by the vigorous Japanese sense of design.

Landscape painting had its heyday in the American colonial period with numerous landscapists headed by De la Rosa and Amorsolo. The dominance of landscapes was primarily due to the preference of the new American patrons for countryside scenes which appealed to them as “exotic.” De la Rosa did realist scenes in the cool light of morning, while Amorsolo used backlighting and warm colors to enhance his countryside views.

Other members of the Amorsolo school based in the UP School of Fine Arts were Pineda, Castañeda, Herrera, Miranda, and Pablo Amorsolo. Collectively, the artists of the Amorsolo school created the vocabulary of the Philippine rural landscape: a rice field promising an abundant harvest, a nipa hut under a spreading mango tree, a bamboo grove, a boy on a carabao, a small stream. After the advent of modernism, artists continuing to paint in the Amorsolo style were counted among the conservatives who later set up their studios along Mabini Street. These include Gabriel Custodio, Miguel Galvez, Serafin Serna, and Cesar Buenaventura.

While Edades—who introduced modernism in 1928—was not a landscapist, another pioneering modernist, Diosdado Lorenzo, specialized in the landscape art in the impressionist style, done with a paint loaded brush in direct, spontaneous brushwork. Although a modernist, he chose the same familiar barrio scenes for his subjects.

In the 1960s a group of landscapists, among them Romulo Galicano, Sofronio Y. Mendoza (SYM), Tiny Nuyda, Ibarra de la Rosa, Andres Cristobal Cruz, and Emilio Aguilar Cruz, formed the Dimasalang group. They popularized on-the-spot painting to capture the unique spirit of a place, in works generally of impressionist influence. Cebuano artists often excel in landscape due to the influence of Carcar maestro Martino Abellana. Aside from Galicano and SYM, are the brothers Godofredo and Teofilo Mendoza, Gamaliel Subang, Mardonio Cempron and others. They have done landscapes of Cebu, old sections of Manila, and urban scenes of barong-barong (slums) with their patchwork roof and lines of

laundry strung across their windows.

Of the Filipino landscapists abroad, Rome-based Leon Pacunayen is an indisputable master of watercolor in landscapes of power and originality, contrasting sharp definitions and atmospheric passages with an expressive interaction of figures in space. Macario Vitalis, residing in northern France, did landscapes of Brittany and the Philippines, of cubist and pointillist influences.

Since the 1960s landscape painting has continued to flourish. Lino Severino came up with his *Vanishing Scene* series which focused on turn-of-the-century crumbling houses and landmarks in a monochrome style combining rigorous draftsmanship and tonal nuance. The magic realists, such as Agustin Goy, Stevesantos, and Nestor Leynes, did landscapes of meticulous detail and striking clarity of form. The landscapes of Elmer Gernale, Al Perez, and Rodolfo Ragodon have an underlying documentary and illustrative intent.

Later developments in landscape art are the mixed media works on cloth of Manuel Rodriguez Jr. aka Boy Rodriguez, showing lush tropical landscapes of rich detail. Manuel Baldemor has also done landscapes of Paete, with a strong folk and festive spirit. Prudencio Lamarrosa introduced the ecological theme in his magical *Amburayan* landscapes—a theme taken up by Jonahmar Salvosa in contrasting works of tropical beauty and decay. Of the printmakers, Fil de la Cruz's landscapes are set in the forests and ancestral lands of the Bagobo and Subanon threatened by logging and landgrabbing. A landscape trend is also observed among the Blanco children of Angono, although they are more into genre. **Seascape** refers to painting or sculpture of which the sea, ocean, or large body of water is the subject. Often this includes the shore or coastline in the foreground or along one side of the pictorial field. Many artists also like to draw the sea with picturesque and unusual rock formations. Even more than landscapes, seascapes, which show a large view of the sea and the sky, convey a sense of the vastness and the infinity of the universe. The impressionists liked to capture the sunlight sparkling on the water and a sense of the ever-changing atmosphere of the outdoor scene. In a romantic and melancholy mood, Hidalgo did several seascapes entitled *Marina con rocas* (Sea with Rocks), with the pale moonlight shining on the waters and the rugged shapes of the rocks on the shore. Luna painted the *Bahia de Vizcaya* (Bay of Biscayne) in predominantly gray tones and a reflective mood.

Still life (French “nature morte,” and Italian “natura morta,” i.e., dead life) is an art work, usually a painting, depicting objects—natural or man-made forming a composition in a natural or domestic setting.

During the dominance of the European academy, still life was considered a minor form in relation to historical paintings and portraits. For a long time, still life was not a separate category but an element in a portrait, landscape, or genre painting. This was because its subject matter of inanimate objects—flowers in a vase, fruits

in a bowl or basket, food or drink on a table, fowl and game on pegs, or the tools and instruments of daily life—was not considered of sufficient significance to constitute an independent form. Artists, however, have always liked to paint still life because of the beauty and variety of subjects—organic and inorganic—and the sensuous qualities of shape, texture, and color.

To enhance their significance, the early still lifes included a skull among floral bouquets, books, and musical instruments. Because of this they were called *memento mori* (Remember you shall die) or *vanitas* (vanity), reminders of mortality and the vanity of all worldly things. Later, instead of the stark presence of the skull, artists used more subtle devices as reminders of the transitoriness of existence and the need to repent for sins. Gentle reminders were a tiny worm in the heart of a flower, bugs and insects that gnawed at the petals and leaves, the fallen petal, the first signs of withering in the rose in full bloom. An element of narrative was later introduced, as in a festive table marred by a goblet overturned by a guest, as if he/she were suddenly called from his/her pleasures. Sometimes, too, elements of the still life—bread and wine—alluded to the Eucharist.

In any case, still life speaks about a people and their world and the objects with which they surround themselves. They reveal a society's sense of beauty, its occupation and everyday concerns, its taste and fashions at a particular time and place. They display the products of a society's industry during a particular period, such as its level of technology. At the same time, the still life also implies a social class and its manners and mores. While the still life made its appearance in classical antiquity, it was only in the 20th century, with its secular temper, when still life as a contemplation of everyday objects in their sensuous properties became fully accepted as an autonomous art form.

In the Philippines, the first still lifes were painted in the 19th century. An artist who distinguished herself in this genre was Paz Paterno who painted still lifes of tropical fruits—full sized, luscious, and ripe—as though from a cornucopia of abundance. It is not at all surprising that a woman artist should favor the form because the traditional training of a well-heeled young lady stressed nature designs in embroidery and various applied arts, including the making of *labor* (embroidery) or molded fruit and shaped flowers in cloth, paper mache, or mother-of-pearl, which were encased in glass, itself a form of still life.

During the American colonial period still life was taken up by Emilio Alvero in several works, including one showing an arrangement of native fruits in a fresh indoor setting. Some still lifes were painted by the Amorsolo school, but these was largely subordinated to genre, landscapes, and portraits.

Modernists who did still lifes in oil, watercolor, print, and drawing, were Manansala, H.R. Ocampo, Arturo Luz, Ang Kiukok, Alcuaz, and Baldemor. Manansala did paintings and drawings—complex compositions of native vegetables and fruits, together with cooking implements in a rural kitchen—in his

transparent cubist style. His still lifes conveyed an appreciation of familiar material. H.R. Ocampo did compositions of fish and fruit in a flat and colorful cubist style. Luz did a series based on a purely formalist concern with the distinctive shapes and tones of objects. Ang Kiukok has done still lifes of interiors, vividly hued and of geometric orientation, playing on planarity and recession. Alcuaz shifts from abstract expressionist works to paintings showing the influence of the School of Paris, particularly of Braque. Baldemor lends a folk spirit to still life which evokes rural culture.

The Forms. Painting can also be studied by focusing on the forms such as **easel painting, murals, telon painting, jeepney and calesa painting, and collage.**

Painting as a form of artistic expression separate from carving or weaving was not practiced in the Philippines before the introduction of Western artistic traditions; for although the carved wooden beams of the Maranao torogan and the frame of the kulintang are polychromed, color is applied as an ornament.

Mural (from Latin “muros” or wall), may be classified as any large, wall-sized painting. Murals have a long history, going back to the landscapes and mythological subjects painted on walls of villas in Rome and Pompeii. During the Renaissance, the masterpieces of mural art were Michelangelo’s painting for the Sistine Chapel, Raphael’s for the papal apartments, and *Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci on the wall of the refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan. In Mexico, from the 1920s to the 1940s, the works of Jose Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siquieros, and Diego Rivera had strong social messages, as did Pablo Picasso’s *Guernica*, painted in protest against the fascist bombing of the small Basque town in 1939. In Chicago, political murals have covered the walls of a black district in assertion of black power.

In 19th-century Philippines, churches were painted with trompe l’oeil effects reminiscent of Renaissance designs and with religious images copied from *estampitas* (printed religious images) and exuding Romantic tendencies. The impetus for the proliferation and popularity of the art form was the revivalist spirit characterizing Philippine tastes at this time. But the immediate impetus for such decorations seems to have been the work done by the Italian scenographic artists Cesar Alberoni and Giovanni Dibella for the San Agustin Church in Intramuros in 1875. After that, churches all over the Philippines were decorated with murals. Simon Flores painted church interiors in Pampanga, his best known work being that in the Betis Church. In the Visayas, Cebuano painters Canuto Avila and Reynaldo Francia were active in the 1930s, painting church interiors in Cebu, Bohol, and Leyte. The art of painting church interiors is still alive as shown in the folksy restorations of churches, such as those in Tayabas, Quezon; Indang, Cavite; and Loay, Bohol. In the last mentioned church, painters from Jagna, Bohol have replaced older paintings of saints with contemporary ones, such as

that of San Lorenzo Ruiz.

Although murals are generally painted as frescos, a true fresco is hardly found in the Philippines. Church murals found in ceilings have a wood and paint support over which a gesso and glue ground is laid, while those on walls are *fresco al secco*, i.e., painted on a dry surface.

In the Philippines, during the Marcos regime, the government sponsored the Kulay-Anyo mural project as part of its beautification campaign to boost tourism. Prominent artists were called upon to participate, among them Cesar Legaspi, Jose Joya, Arturo Luz, Manuel Rodriguez Sr., Hernando R. Ocampo, along with some younger artists. Legaspi did a long horizontal mural in Parañaque by the bay; Joya painted an abstract in the midst of a Tondo community; Rodriguez Sr. and Luz had theirs in Makati, and H.R. Ocampo had his work in Cubao, but it has been covered by a building. School children were also given free paints and access to walls.

From these recent experiences in public murals, the question was posed as to whether a mural was several-times-magnified version of an easel painting, or whether it had a particular character of its own—for scale is an important aspect of a mural and therefore must participate in its meaning.

A number of artists, particularly the social realists, believed that murals should convey messages relevant to the social conditions of society and to the urgent issues of the time. Since it was obvious that protest murals risked being effaced, a new mural form gained popularity. This was the portable mural. Large sized and made of several pieces of canvas or cheesecloth, the portable mural became an important visual part of every rally, along with streamers and banners, after which it was rolled up and conveniently stored. The murals, vividly colored and executed in bold strokes, exhorted the public to fight for their rights, honored heroes, and sought justice for martyrs, condemned abuses, and asserted workers' rights. The strong images were underlined by the slogans of the day. After the assassination of Benigno Aquino Jr. aka "Ninoy," a well known mural which portrayed the faces of Aquino, Macliing Dulag, Dr. Johnny Escandor, and Edgar Jopson bore the slogan "Justice for Ninoy, justice for All." Another mural was ***Fight for the People's Right to Know*** done by the late socially-committed artist Emmanuel Gutierrez. Many murals have been done by fine arts graduates in mass organizations from the Marcos regime up to the present. Often commissioned by nongovernment organizations, the murals are done collectively by a group, such as Artista ng Bayan (ABAY), although a senior artist supervises it and gives it the finishing touches.

In recent times, younger artists in organizations have done murals in different communities through outreach programs such as those of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) with the cooperation of municipal officials. Public murals have been done in towns, such as Pasig, Pateros, Obando, usually initiated by

well-known artists, such as Edgar Fernandez and Lazaro Soriano aka Aro Soriano, in interaction with aspiring young artists of the community. As in the portable murals, these have a strong symbolic aspect as they bring together the cultural symbols of the community to convey nationalist sentiments and awaken the sense of national and community identity.

Painting was also used for the **telon**, stage backdrops or backgrounds for the popular forms of the *komedya*, *sinakulo*, and *sarswela*. The sarswela telon, generally more sophisticated than those of the komedya and sinakulo, were made of canvas cloth of an average of 4.27 meters x 9.14 meters in size, or even larger when the presentation was performed on a bigger stage. *Pulbos de sin* (zinc oxide), mixed with water and gum arabic, produced the basic white paint which in turn was mixed with commercially available dyes, such as *añil* (indigo or blue dye) and *almagre* (red dye) to produce the desired colors. The one-act sarswela needed only one telon, but full-length versions demanded a minimum of four. At the height of the popularity of the sarswela, the telon had a vital part in the critical evaluation of the whole presentation.

In Manila during the early decades of the 20th century, among the well-known telon makers were Toribio Antillon, Juan Abelardo, Ramon Peralta, and Emilio Alvero. In Iloilo, where the sarswela of Cristobal, Nava, Ingalla, Magahum, and Montelibano flourished, the telon makers were Vicente de San Miguel, Andres Lobaton, Jose Zaradin, Romulo Cabales, and Felipe Zaldivar. The most talented and prolific of them was San Miguel. His realist style showed traces of the miniaturist style applied to an outdoor setting of houses and beautiful gardens done with a meticulous delineation of foliage, and often with a perspective in depth. Upon the waning of the sarswela, the telon transferred from the theater stage to the plaza stage during fiestas and carnivals and continued in churches for religious celebrations, such as the *monumento* for Holy Thursday. It later found a home as a *fondo* (backdrop) in the photography studio where it provided a romantic, comic, or fantastic background against which clients posed.

While school-trained artists experiment on different media and contemporary forms and styles, the folk tradition of decorative painting in bright colors flourishes in the calesa (horse-drawn carriages), jeepneys, and ice-cream carts. The calesa or *tartanilla* first appeared as a means of public transportation during the Spanish period. These vehicles were decorated with chased metal appliques and paint. In general, the calesa is painted in a single color and its borders decorated with thin lines, geometric patterns, or repetitive designs.

Jeepney painting grew from the calesa tradition. In fact, one jeepney manufacturer, Sarao, once drove a calesa. Like the calesa, the Sarao jeepney is a broad mass of color bounded by designs. A common border is the rope design and the bamboo design. The hood and the sides of the jeepney are areas of decoration. Usually a painting, logo, or number is painted near the driver's seat and the seats

beside it. More recent airbrushed paintings depict landscapes and scenes from comic books.

The task of painting the jeepney is divided between the artisans who lay the ground of color, who paint a picture, and who make the designs. More recent jeepneys, especially those made by Atendido, use more chrome than painting in the tradition of calesa decorative art.

Another folk form that shares the calesa tradition is the *cariton*, the cart for home-made ice cream. Box shaped, the cart has two decorated spoked wheels like the calesa and a pair of wooden legs at its rear to allow it to stand firmly when at rest. Like the calesa, chrome and paint is used to decorate the cart. Chrome is used for the top and the cover of the cart usually embellished with finials. Paint is used for the sides of the cart designed as a quadrilateral solid. Like the jeepney, broad areas of color are decorated with borders. The name of the ice-cream company is usually written on the sides of the cart. The front usually has a landscape, like the Maria Cristina Falls in Lanao del Norte or sunset in Manila Bay.

A contemporary form of painting is the **collage** which is a scissor-and-paste method of combining ready-made images by pasting bits of fabric, paper, tin foil, and other relatively flat odds and ends onto a canvas or board. The technique is usually associated with the early work of the cubists around 1918. Braque and Picasso were the first to incorporate real objects, such as pieces of newspaper, into their pictures, the objects acquiring a dual function as themselves and as elements of a picture. Artists use collage to achieve greater variety in color and texture and to expand artistic resources beyond the traditional. Since the original cubists, collage has been employed by artists to create all manners of effects. In this process, photographs, news cuttings, logos, printed texts, and all kinds of materials and objects are pasted onto the painted ground or are combined with passages of simulated texture. The cuttings and objects are sometimes selected for their associative or representational values. Sometimes, interest is primarily in the formal and textural qualities of the work. The use of collage in printmaking has been fairly recent and may have been inspired by the availability of colored tissue, a material flat enough to allow the intaglio plate to print on it.

Among local artists who work with collage are Roberto Chabet, Eva Toledo, and Nilo Ilarde. Imelda Cajipe-Endaya uses it extensively in her paintings using denims, crocheted lace, and sawali panels. Social realist Neil Doloricon uses the logos of transnational corporations. • A.G.Guillermo/J. Javelosa/R. Javellana

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