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VICENTE ALVAREZ DIZON

Vicente ALvarez Dizon (1905 - 1947) was born on April 5, 1905 in Malate, Manila. His parents were Jose Sampedro Dizon, a native of Bacolor, and Rosa Carlos Alvarez, of Concepcion, Tarlac. His father (University of Santo Tomas 1897) was a landscape artist, and botanist-agronomist for the Bureau of Agriculture. As an agronomist and agricultural inspector, Mr. Jose S. Dizon was assigned to several towns like Capas, Tarlac, Magalang, Pampanga, San Isidro, Nueva Ecija. Vicente had his early schooling at Malate Primary School; then continued his intermediate studies in the towns where his father was assigned.

In Cabanatuan, he joined the town's musical band where he played the piccolo. When he was in high school, he stayed with his godparents at their residence in Malate, Manila. He graduated in high school from the National University High School. At sixteen, he was already illustrating like a professional artist even without any previous art schooling. He illustrated for pre-war Liwayway Publications especially the stories of "Lola Basyang", Graphic Herald, TVT papers and the Women's Home Journal, while he was still in high school.

His father wanted him to study Medicine and he obeyed. He attended the National University College of Medicine (1921-23). He later transferred to the University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts and took a 5-year course and graduated with an Art Diploma (with high honors) in 1928. After graduation, he became the first artist-lecturer of the Philippines. He also distinguished himself as one of the first Filipinos to win important scholarships abroad, such as those awarded him by the Federal Schools of Art, Minneapolis, Minnesota. On his own, he applied for a scholarship and was accepted at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, U. S. A. (1934)

He met his future wife, Ma. Ines Lutgarda Henson y Sadie in Manila while she was studying high school and eventually music under Sr. Baptista Battig O.S.B. (piano) at the St. Scholastica's College where she graduated in 1929. Ines was the daughter of Jose P. Henson and Maxima Rosario Sadie, both of Angeles Pampanga. Vicente married Ines on September 8, 1929 at the Malate Catholic Church.

My mother when she was sixteen

They were blessed with 7 children, Victor and Daniel, who are identical twins (two boys and a girl died in infancy), Luminoso, and Josefina. Victor, (who passed away last May 6, 2002) was an Electrical Engineer graduate of the National University. Daniel is a Fine Arts graduate, major in Advertising from the University of the Philippines. Luminoso is an Automotive Mechanic graduate of the National Schools. Josefina is also a Fine Arts graduate, major in Painting, from the University of Santo Tomas.

In 1929, Vicente won a scholarship from an Art School in America (The Federal Schools was a Correspondence School in Minneapolis, Minnesota). He was also busy at his easel, as if time was running short for him, producing many historical and genre paintings.

He did lots of research on local costumes and prepared 39 watercolor paintings: "Filipino Costumes 1500-1935". He was offered US$5,000 dollars by Lord Barnby of the University of London (who sailed on the same ship with him on his way to Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, U. S. A. for his scholarship). He later sold these to the UP Library in 1940 but these got burned during the Liberation of Manila in 1945.

He also painted "The Battle of Zapote Bridge", "The Battle of Tirad Pass", "The Struggle", etc. He was a pioneer in the crusade for Art Education at all educational levels; a teacher of Drawing and Art Appreciation at the National Teachers' College (1929-41). In 1932, he was elected executive secretary of the Philippine Association of Fine and Applied Arts.

In 1934, Vicente again won another scholarship, this time at the Yale University in Connecticut, U.S.A. Tall, lean with Castillan features, he was a good dresser and easily stood-out in his white de-hilo suit even in America. here, he tried his best in his studies. Once in a while he would get invited to lecture about Philippine Art and Culture and during these lecture tours around America, he always exhibited his "Filipino Costumes" paintings. He also displayed his musical prowess and at one time applied to join Major Bowe's Amateur Hour in the National Broadcasting Company in Radio City, New York. There about 10,000 applicants a week in this contest and Vicente passed the audition and got the reply in three days. So, a week later, he played on the ocarina his own composition "Batu-bato" inspired by the chirping of a small native Philippine bird, and he also played a musical saw in the World's Largest Station in Radio City in New York. Mr. Edward G. Robinson, the actor, and Graham McNamee, news commentator were seated in front of the auditorium with the audience of 3,000. In playing there, Vicente put the Philippines on the map and enhanced the prestige of Yale University. Other musical instruments he played were the piano, flute, piccolo, musical saw, and "monolin", a cello-like instrument with only one string; which he invented. Vicente had other compositions for the piano and Nicanor Abelardo arranged some of these.

In 1936, during his stay in Yale, Vicente was the first Filipino to be elected as one of the 12 members of the "Yale Phi Alpha", a singular honor since only 12 members were elected each year from the more than 300 students. Likewise, he was the recipient of a very dignified and rare honor to become an associate member of the American Museum of Natural History. It was also during his stint in Yale that he painted his famous painting "After the Day's Toil".

Because of his studiousness and enthusiasm, he was given assignments during summer, so after just one and a half years instead of 3 years) he graduated on June 7, 1936 with a degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts with Distinction, from Yale University. He specialized in Painting, Mural Decoration, Composition, General Art Education, and Museum Administration.

My father in his studio at Yale University

He then went home to the Philippines and continued to teach as a full professor of Art at the Mapua Institute of Technology (1937-41). When he came back to the Philippines, he introduced the Art of Finger Painting and he was invited to lecture and demonstrate the new medium and technique in Manila and around Central Luzon. He also did his famous Chalk Talk lectures (where somebody from the audience was asked to draw any form or line on the black board and he would then transform this into a recognizable object or figure).

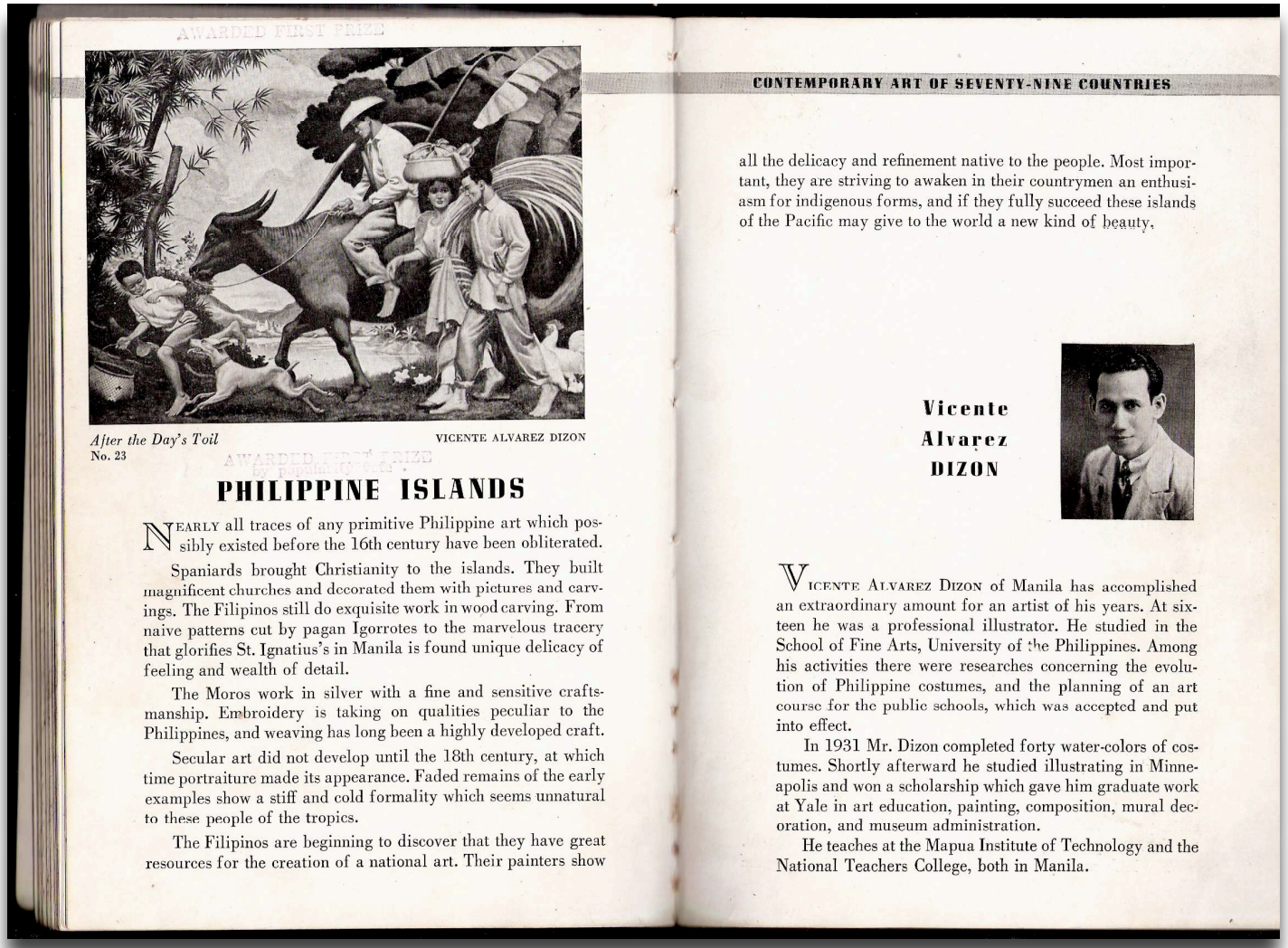
In 1939, Mr. Kevin Mallen, a representative of the International Business Machines Corporation (IBM), went to see Vicente at their residence in 1111 A. Mabini St., Manila. Mr. Mallen came to take a look at Vicente's painting "After the Day's Toil". After seeing it, Mr. Mallen right-away bought it for IBM. It was framed and shipped to the U.S.A. and included in the International Competition on Contemporary Art of 79 Nations at the Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco, California. In this historic competition, his painting won First Place by popular votation (later judged by a jury). *The entry of Spain by Salvador Dali won Second Place, and the entry of the United Stateswon Third Place. The French Impressionist Maurice Utrillo also had an entry but he did not win* .

Left: My father at the residence of his best friend and classmate, Mario Cappabianca; Right: Posing with Mario and his father with his sisters and their pet dog at their spacious Cappabianca garden in Stamford, Connecticut while studying at Yale Univ.

The Golden Gate International Exposition was held in order to celebrate the city's two new bridges. The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge was dedicated on November 12, 1936; the Golden Gate Bridge was dedicated on May 27, 1937; and on August 26, 1937, dredging for Treasure Island, the site of the Fair, was complete. Treasure Island was an island which was completely flat in the middle of the Bay Bridge near Yerba Buena Island. The Fair ran from February 18 through October 29 in 1939, and from May 25 through September 29 in 1940.

"Unity of the Pacific nations is America's concern and responsibility. San Francisco stands at the doorway to the sea that roars upon the shores of all these nations; and so to the Golden Gate International Exposition I gladly entrust a solemn duty. May this, America's world's fair on the Pacific in 1939, truly serve all nations". **- President Franklin D. Roosevelt**

Below are pages from the brief biodatas of the participants of the 1939 Catalogue of the 79 Countries sponsored by International Business Machines (formerly Watson's Business Machines Corporation) at the Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco, California, U.S.A.:



AWARDED FIRST PRIZE

After the Day's Toil VICENTE ALVAREZ DIZON
No. 23

AWARDED FIRST PRIZE

PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

NEARLY all traces of any primitive Philippine art which possibly existed before the 16th century have been obliterated.

Spaniards brought Christianity to the islands. They built magnificent churches and decorated them with pictures and carvings. The Filipinos still do exquisite work in wood carving. From naive patterns cut by pagan Igorrotes to the marvelous tracery that glorifies St. Ignatius's in Manila is found unique delicacy of feeling and wealth of detail.

The Moros work in silver with a fine and sensitive craftsmanship. Embroidery is taking on qualities peculiar to the Philippines, and weaving has long been a highly developed craft.

Secular art did not develop until the 18th century, at which time portraiture made its appearance. Faded remains of the early examples show a stiff and cold formality which seems unnatural to these people of the tropics.

The Filipinos are beginning to discover that they have great resources for the creation of a national art. Their painters show

CONTEMPORARY ART OF SEVENTY-NINE COUNTRIES

all the delicacy and refinement native to the people. Most important, they are striving to awaken in their countrymen an enthusiasm for indigenous forms, and if they fully succeed these islands of the Pacific may give to the world a new kind of beauty.

Vicente Alvarez DIZON

VICENTE ALVAREZ DIZON of Manila has accomplished an extraordinary amount for an artist of his years. At sixteen he was a professional illustrator. He studied in the School of Fine Arts, University of the Philippines. Among his activities there were researches concerning the evolution of Philippine costumes, and the planning of an art course for the public schools, which was accepted and put into effect.

In 1931 Mr. Dizon completed forty water-colors of costumes. Shortly afterward he studied illustrating in Minneapolis and won a scholarship which gave him graduate work at Yale in art education, painting, composition, mural decoration, and museum administration.

He teaches at the Mapua Institute of Technology and the National Teachers College, both in Manila.

Vicente Alvarez Dizon, Philippines, First Place

2ND PRIZE

Enigmatic Elements in Landscape
No. 79 SALVADOR DALI

SPAIN

When in the 16th century the great age of Spanish painting began two superficially incompatible qualities forthwith asserted joint sovereignty. From then until now mystical yearning and acute sensitiveness to material realities, sometimes only one, sometimes both together, have ruled the art of Spain.

Another baffling anomaly presents itself at the outset. El Greco was not a Spaniard but a Greek; and he had the regard for outward appearance and the mysticism which governed later Spanish artists. He studied in sensuous Renaissance Venice and worked in Toledo, still at heart medieval, but he is known in the 20th century as a "modernist."

At Valencia Francisco de Ribalta led the way toward naturalism which Ribera brought to extreme realization when the superb 17th century was beginning. Painters of Seville also advanced toward naturalism; there, however, mysticism again came into its own, for Zurbaran, like El Greco, was more than a naturalist and devoted himself to spiritual ardors of monastic votaries. Velasquez, who early left Seville to become court painter in Madrid, chose the material world and fixed his clear gaze upon factual truth. His command of brush and pigment has perhaps never been equaled. The beloved Murillo brought to his canvas simple religious feeling, which on occasion rose to sublimity, and a liking for realistic portrayal of everyday things and people. In the 18th century Goya took up the naturalistic tradition with the same absolute fidelity to visual truth that Velasquez had shown. Painting in the 19th century was less obedient than formerly to deep racial impulses until Sorolla and Zuloaga appeared.

With the 20th century the old forces reasserted absolute dominion. Some contemporary men are unsparing naturalists. Others, no matter how modern their idiom, are as certainly mystics as El Greco himself.

Salvador DALI

Salvador Dali, eminent exponent of Surrealism, was born in Barcelona and studied at the Madrid Academy of Fine Arts. Paris saw his first one-man exhibition in 1929, and two years later he exhibited in New York. He received an award at the 1934 Carnegie International Exhibition.

His work has been acquired for many collections in Europe and the United States, including those at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford.

Salvador Dali, Spain, Second Place

3RD PRIZE

Central Park
No. 14 ROBERT PHILIPP

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In the 18th century the current English style was followed by American painters. Many of them were trained in London by a compatriot, West, who enjoyed much contemporary esteem. Copley, too, lived in London. West's theories on the painting of portraits and historical subjects were exemplified in America by Stuart, Trumbull, Sully, and Rembrandt Peale, some of whom worked on into the next century.

The second quarter of the 19th century produced the Hudson River school and enthusiasm for native landscape. Among the men associated with this movement were Cole, Inman, Durand, Inness, Bierstadt, Martin, and Wyant.

From the early seventies onward rapid development occurred. Public collections were begun at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and elsewhere; private collectors became more numerous; schools were founded, though many students still went to Paris for much of their training. Homer and Eakins showed distinctively American feeling. Ryder's mystical canvases were strangely imaginative. Inness, Martin, Hunt, and La Farge were all affected by French ideas which became increasingly potent throughout the latter part of the century. Mary Cassatt, Twachtman, and Hassam adopted Impressionism. Sargent and Whistler settled in London. With the turn of the century great changes were brought about by the daring realistic subjects of Henri, Sloan, Luks, Glackens, Davies, and others.

The New York Armory Show in 1913 was a fateful turning point; it gave stimulus and greater freedom to artists and helped to bring about wider acceptance of modern styles. Since then the 20th century has seen much work done by many variously gifted men. Mexican example has stimulated a revival of mural decoration. Native artists now paint American subjects to an increasing extent, and speak the new idioms with a Yankee accent.

Robert PHILIPP

Robert Philipp was born in New York where he received his training at the National Academy of Design and the Art Students' League. He is an associate member of the National Academy.

Paintings by Mr. Philipp hang in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. In 1922 he won the Second Halgarten Prize at the National Academy, in 1936 the much coveted First Prize and Logan Medal at the Chicago Art Institute, and First Honorable Mention at the Carnegie International in 1937, being the only American artist to receive an award that year.

Robert Philipp, United States, Third Place

Church of St. Aignan at Chartres
No. 76 MAURICE UTRILLO

FRANCE

AMONG the many facets of French genius one has always shone with peculiar luster — a creative sense of the technical procedures that give visible form to imaginative substance, extraordinary logic of the formal imagination.

In the 17th century this aptitude of the national genius was clearly revealed by Poussin and Claude Lorrain. Both mastered spatial composition. Poussin's plastic line, largely derived from antique sculpture and long an academic tenet, came to life again in the 18th century at the hands of David. Watteau devised subtle stylistic refinements; Lancret, Pater, Boucher, Fragonard, were also inventive stylists, though they could not often equal his airy touch and ethereal imagination. The early 19th century brought Delacroix's romantic color and movement. Chasseriau added romantic warmth to classicism. In 1850 Courbet started realism on its turbulent career.

Manet's studies of reflected light, natural and artificial, swiftly seen, summarily noted with simplified planes, helped the Impressionists on their way and in 1874 they exhibited. Those who, like Monet, held the extreme doctrine painted naturalistically evanescent atmospheric effects of light, surface reflections seen in the open air. They juxtaposed separate spectrum colors so that, at a proper distance, the eye would blend them into vibrant luminosity. Pissarro, Renoir, Cezanne, and some later men—Seurat, Neoimpressionist, Gauguin and Van Gogh, Postimpressionists—feeling this doctrine was too narrow, pursued additional aims.

But it was Cezanne who brought about a new epoch. His patient, divinatory gaze explored space and solid objects with profound perception of geometrical verities; he labored to perfect a procedure for indicating them with color by revelatory tonal "modulations." From him the art of the 20th century, representational or abstract, has come.

So, as time went on, French painters, consummately endowed with creative logic of the formal imagination, made Paris the city of light for artists everywhere, and gave modern painting to the world.

Maurice UTRILLO

MAURICE UTRILLO, a native of France, took the Spanish surname when he was adopted by Miguel Utrillo, an artist and journalist. His mother—who had acquired great proficiency as an artist and, under her maiden name, Valadon, had painted for many years—gave him his first instruction.

A passion for art has kept him constantly at easel and palette. Even periods of ill health have not prevented him from painting the scenes that were to mean so much to him. Montmartre has supplied many of his subjects. He now lives quietly in the country, and to all appearances is indifferent about his great renown.

Maurice Utrillo, France

"AFTER THE DAY'S TOIL"

After winning this prestigious award, Vicente continued to teach and was a faculty member of the

University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts where he lectured on History of Art (1940-47) and at the UP college of Education, where he also lectured on Art and Interior Decoration (1946-47).

Likewise, he was an associate professor in Painting and Theory of Arts. He was appointed member of the Alumni Committee for reorganization of the UP College of Fine Arts in 1938.

He was also an artist and historical consultant in the U.S. Army, 5th Air Force Command at Clark Field from February to August 1945. He introduced the art of Finger Painting in the Philippines.

Below are two Finger Paintings and a few paintings from his collection of 30 watercolor paintings titled *"From Japanese Invasion to American Liberation, As My Brush Saw It".*

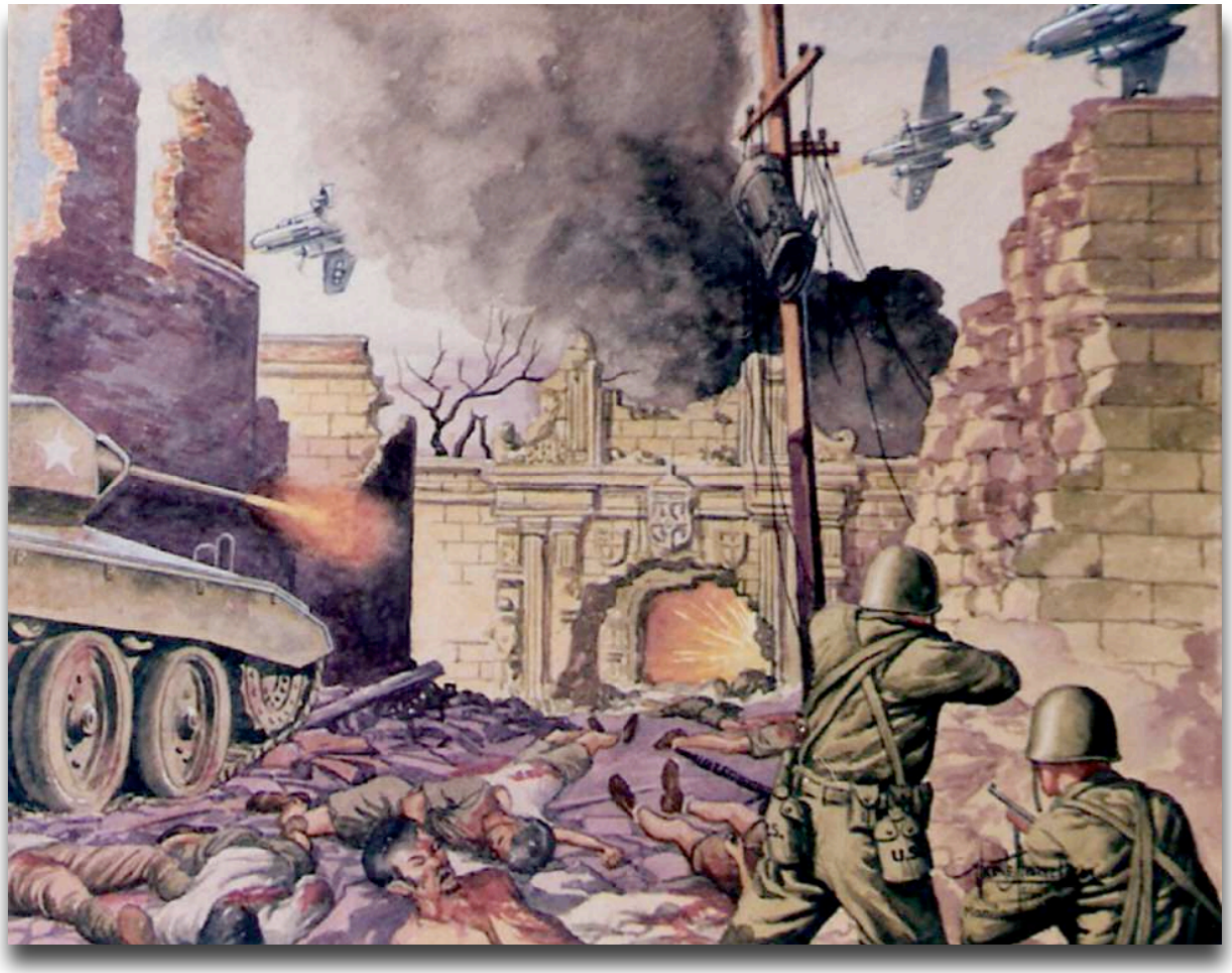
Rain (finger painting)

Seascape (finger painting)

"Evacuation from Angeles"

"Japanese Time in Manila"

"Victory Joe at Magalang, Pampanga"



"The Battle of Manila"

"The Angelus"

WATSON BUSINESS MACHINES CORPORATION
401 PHILNABANK BLDG., MANILA

OFFICE OF
THE MANAGER

November 8, 1939

Mr. Vicente Alvarez Dizon
Present

Dear Mr. Dizon:-

We have great pleasure in presenting you herewith with the prize money awarded you for First Prize in the International Business Machines Contemporary Art Exhibit at the San Francisco Golden Gate Exposition.

May we wish you every success in the future.

With warmest personal regards.

Yours sincerely,

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINES CORPORATION

T. KEVIN MALLEN
Representative

Vicente is included in the "Distinguished 100", a book where-in one hundred U.P. Alumni with rare achievements are published. He is also included in the 1940 edition of "Who is Who" in the Biographical Encyclopedia of America, and in the 1941 edition of the Biographical Encyclopedia of the World. During the war years, he secretly started recording life during those difficult times and finished 30 colorful and dramatic war paintings which he titled "From Japanese Invasion to American Liberation, As My Brush Saw It". He is also the author of 2 books one of which was published: "Art Education and Appreciation" and "Living As An Art", which was never published.

The deprivations of the war years taxed his energies and weakened his health considerably. In 1946, he literally dragged himself out to re- organize the U.P. College of Fine Arts…but time for him was running out…on October 17, 1947, after wasting away in sheer exhaustion and illness, he died of bronco-pneumonia in his residence in Angeles, Pampanga.

This was Vicente Alvarez Dizon, my father: The History Artist Whom History Entirely Forgot!

by: Josie Dizon Henson, B.F.A.

A photo given to my father with a dedication and signed by Mr. Thomas J. Watson, Founder of IBM (Formerly Watson Business Corporation), in 1940.

Above: The winner's medal, front and back

Josie standing beside the "After The Day's Toil" original owned by a Filipino Doctor in the United States, June 2009

Made on a Mac