



## TREASURES OF PHILIPPINE ART

*El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante*  
by Félix Resurrección Hidalgo





NATIONAL MUSEUM  
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**Félix Resurrección Hidalgo**

**Art History and Conservation Publication Series (Vol. 1)**

**National Museum**

**Manila, Philippines**

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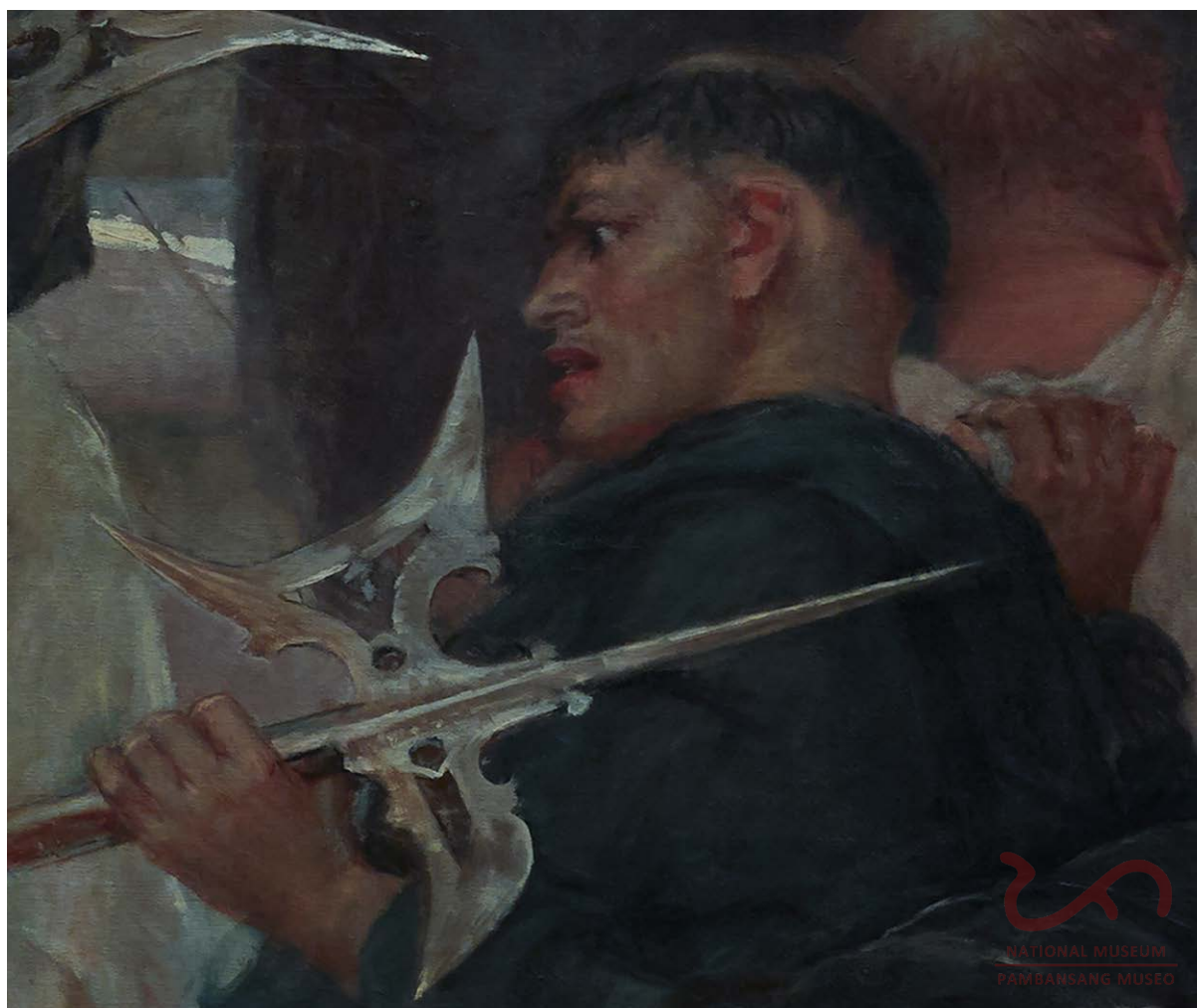
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***El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante*** by Félix Resurrección Hidalgo  
(National Museum; the gift of Cecilia Yulo-Locsin in memory of Leandro V. Locsin)



## FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

Jeremy R. Barns

It is with great pleasure that the National Museum produces this publication, the first in a planned new series of art history and conservation monographs that focus primarily on masterworks of Philippine art that this institution holds in trust for the Filipino people. Among the greatest of these is what was probably the last major work of Félix Resurrección Hidalgo, and certainly by far the largest of his extant paintings, *El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante* (The Assassination of Governor Bustamante).

This painting is a landmark for many reasons: its virtuoso display of Hidalgo's artistic genius; its dramatic and controversial depiction of a historical event with underlying themes that continue to resonate and provoke commentary and discourse to the present day; its being the manifestation of the social and political thinking of the great reformist and revolutionary heroes of our country from the generation of Padre Burgos to that of Dr. Rizal; its official recognition - the first of any Philippine work of art - as a National Cultural Treasure; being one of the most ambitious conservation and restoration projects carried out, with great success, by the National Museum's experts; and being among the most generous gifts of a work of art of the highest importance that has ever been made by a private benefactor, in this case the late National Artist and eminent architect Leandro V. Locsin and Mrs. Cecilia Yulo-Locsin and family, to the National Museum and the Filipino people.

The pages that follow include an essay by Alfredo Roces, the foremost writer on the life, times, and work of Hidalgo, together with further art historical notes by the National Museum's resident art historian, Dr. Pearlie Baluyut, as well as documentation of the Painting's conservation and restoration by the National Museum project team of experts led by Orlando Abinon. We hope that this and future publications in the series, which was conceptualized by Dr. Ana Labrador, Assistant Director of the National Museum, will serve as an indispensable reference for students, researchers, historians, artists conservators, restorers, and, of course, lovers of Philippine art and cultural heritage.

The National Museum expresses its deep gratitude firstly to Leandro V. Locsin and Cecilia Yulo-Locsin for their philanthropy and strong support of the institution's mission and aims; and also to the committee established for overseeing the donation of *El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante*: National Museum Trustee Mrs. Maria Isabel G. Ongpin, distinguished historian Dr. Ambeth R. Ocampo, Mrs. Socorro P. Paterno, and the late Fr. Rodrigo Perez III. We are also grateful to the Museum Foundation of the Philippines and the LVL-CYA (Locsin) Foundation for their financial support of the conservation and restoration project, and to Ms. Missy Señares Reyes and Ms. Maita M. Reyes for their generous technical assistance in bringing this National Cultural Treasure back to its best possible state, thereby bridging the divide in time and space between all present and future admirers of the painting and the mind, eye, and hand of Félix Resurrección Hidalgo.

## PREFACE

**Cecilia Yulo-Locsin**

For those who have been deeply engaged with art, artifacts, and expressions of a people's heritage, there comes a time for circumspection when larger questions present themselves — questions that go beyond the realm of aesthetic appreciation, academic fascination, the primal need to understand one's past, and the vanities that sometimes accompany the activity of collecting. Often, this comes rather late in life. But from the very beginning of our marriage and at the outset of a "collecting life", my husband Lindy and I have been acutely aware and mindful of these questions and the issues that we would eventually be faced with. In particular:

- Why do we collect when we do?
- What meaning do these objects have and to whom?
- Who or what should ultimately be the proper stewards of these objects?
- Are the circumstances right to place the stewards in a position to care for these objects in a manner that befits the people for whom these object have meaning?

From the first day that Hidalgo's masterpiece came into our possession over thirty-five years ago, there were no doubts in our minds as to what the answers were to the first three questions. In fact, our private conclusions even prior to the acquisition drove the decision to obtain the painting with the specific intention to preserve the work in a relatively stable environment, in the hope that one day, the promise of the fourth question could be answered in the affirmative.

Many years passed and the irony between the content of "The Assassination of Governor Bustamante" and our own tumultuous national experience did not escape us. Beyond Hidalgo's technical mastery and as a reflection of the context in which the work was executed, the lessons, parallels, and an understanding of the historical background depicted on canvas are indeed potentially instructive toward the cognizance of self and an understanding of the Filipino psyche. Such is the power of great art. And now, with a revitalized National Museum that has finally settled in its home, perhaps the circumstances do not warrant answering the fourth question in the affirmative. My husband and I had always had this in mind in our desire to make a contribution to our people's self-knowledge, and we hope that others see fit to do the same — not only in supporting this important institution in terms of material — but more critically, by providing the time, effort, legislation, and serious resources which the institution badly needs to ensure that this material is well cared for, secured, and preserved for generations of Filipinos to come.

My only regret is that Lindy never had the personal pleasure of turning this masterwork over to the National Museum. In light of his passing in 1994, perhaps only history and hindsight many years from now will tell if our collective judgment as a family — a husband, wife, and our two sons Leandro Jr. and Luis — was appropriately timed and an enlightened one. We did take profound solace in the fact that Lindy's close personal friends who agreed to accept the responsibility of serving on the Donor's Committee were on hand during the turnover — Fr. Rodrigo Perez, Arturo and Tessie Luz, Maria Isabel Ongpin, Soccoro Paterno, and Ambeth Ocampo. I have no doubt that Lindy smiled upon us that day for seeing a fervent wish through to its realization.

It is now for others to consider these questions while learning from the many lessons the work still holds for us. Hidalgo's masterwork has come home.

September 2006









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R. Hidalgo





Félix Resurrección Hidalgo in his Paris studio, circa 1900  
(Collection of Ambeth R. Ocampo)

## HISTORY AS ART: PAINTING AN ILUSTRADO ICON

Alfredo R. Roces\*

“Many of those who live here are always lacking in blood and are short of breath,” Dr. José Rizal lamented in a letter from Madrid to his brother Paciano in Calamba, adding “but I cannot understand why they lack perseverance in their aims. Is it due to their youth or is it because their flesh is not cut by wounds...” Rizal, however, made a special point of setting a colleague apart from this general observation, noting “...there are also those like F.R. ... who have a concealed heat which is nevertheless discerned, like smoke in the mountain that hides fire [within].”<sup>1</sup>

Félix Resurrección Hidalgo could be seen as your closet filibustero. Alongside the more fiery leaders of the Propaganda Movement of his day, Hidalgo was viewed as reserved and low-profiled. That ‘concealed heat’ that Rizal had discerned in “F.R.” would surface quite late in his career in a magnum opus entitled *El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante* (The Assassination of Governor Bustamante) which he painted in the final chapter of his life; almost like a last hurrah.

He conceived this opus a good decade after his painting *Virgenes Cristianas Expuestas al Populacho* (Christian Virgins Exposed to the Populace) had won the ninth silver medal at the Exposicion Nacional de Bellas Artes in Madrid in 1884. His best known work at the time, *La Barca de Aqueronte* (The Bark of Charon) which had earned him a silver medal from an international jury in the highly prestigious Paris Exposition of 1889, spoke only in universal moral tones signalling no specific political reference to any Philippine context. The painting about the killing of Bustamante is unique for its strong political statement.

So controversial was Hidalgo’s subject of the Bustamante assassination that the painting was never publicly exhibited in Spain and the Philippines in the artist’s lifetime; and for a good half a century more after that, despite having been awarded a gold medal elsewhere at the distantly safe Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis in the United States in 1904 (where the painting was exhibited with the title *La Iglesia contra el Estado* or “The Church Against the State”). It was finally unveiled to the eyes of the Filipino public at the National Museum in Manila only on 1 October 1974 at the beginning of the Marcos Martial Law years; and then 14 years later at the First National Juan Luna and Félix Resurreccion Hidalgo Commemorative Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila in 1988.

Why did Hidalgo, the low-keyed rebel, decide to tackle this highly explosive subject matter only to be reluctant to show it to his Filipino public? What is this Bustamante painting all about?

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\* Alfredo Reyes Roces is a writer, editor and artist, and the author of *Félix Resurrección Hidalgo and the Generation of 1872* (Pasig City, Philippines: Eugenio Lopez Foundation, Inc., 1998). He presently resides in Sydney, Australia.



Fernando Bustamante was the first field marshal to serve as Governor-General of the Philippines. The first step he took after taking office in 1717 was to examine the state of the Royal Treasury; whereupon he uncovered a nest of corruption revolving around the colony's only economic activity: the Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade. It turned out that officials and religious corporations were the main ingredients in this can of worms. As the investigation began to zero in on the corrupt officials, these clever gentlemen evaded arrest by seeking time-honored sanctuary inside the churches of the religious corporations. The conflict with the Governor-General escalated to crisis point when Archbishop Francisco de la Cuesta refused to hand these corrupt officials over to the State, causing Bustamante to throw the Archbishop himself in the state dungeons.

To the ringing of the church bells of Intramuros, the walled city of Manila, the friars stirred a vicious rabble to march in rage to the Palace and physically vent their fury on the graft-busting Governor-General. As Bustamante stood in his palace stairway engulfed by a swirling violent mob, his son, the sergeant-major and castellan of Fort Santiago nearby, rushed to his aid only to be murdered as well. Having disposed of Bustamante and son, the good Archbishop de la Cuesta then assumed the office of Governor-General *ad interim*.

Filipino historians nowadays shrug off this episode as a passing, if odd, chapter in the history of the Spanish colonizers in the Philippines, but in Hidalgo's time it was charged with meaning and very much a part of their own *ilustrado* (meaning elite Spanish-Filipino) history. The incident portrayed vividly the power of the Spanish friars and their religious corporations over an effete State ruling through a mélange of short-tenured officials coming and going through the Spanish government's revolving doors. In Hidalgo's time - the last quarter of the 19th century - the socio-political conflict bubbled and boiled over the increasing friar dominance over parishes already ably run by native Filipino clergy. As in the case of the Bustamante killing, the power of the State was ruthlessly brushed aside as the friars appeared to assume both spiritual and temporal powers over the entire colony.

To the Ilustrados involved in the Propaganda Movement, the public garrotting at Bagumbayan of the three Filipino priests Gomez, Burgos, and Zamora without trial in 1872 dramatized the colony's horrendous state of affairs under a "friarocracy", replaying that brutal murder of Bustamante by friar power back in 1719.

The parallel was emotionally vivid to them. You sense it in the writings of the vocal spokesmen of the era. In the very first chapter of Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* for example, just eight pages into the novel, the reader is introduced to this dysfunctional relationship between Church and State in the Philippines through a recently arrived young and naive lieutenant who is being lectured to by the veteran Franciscan friar and parish priest Damaso Verdolagas:

There you have the cause of so much calamities! The ruling officials support heretics against God's ministers!' continued the Franciscan raising his ponderous fists.

"What do you mean?" The frowning lieutenant inquired once more, half rising from his chair.

"What do I mean?" repeated Fray Damaso, raising his voice even more and confronting the lieutenant. "I'll tell you what I mean. I, - yes I, mean to say that when a priest throws

out of his cemetery the corpse of a heretic, no one, not even the King himself, has any right to meddle and much less to impose punishment! But some little General - a little General 'Calamity'" -

"Padre, his Excellency is the Vice-regal Patron!" shouted the soldier, rising to his feet.

"Excellency! Vice-Regal Patron! So what?" retorted the Franciscan, also rising up. "In other times he would have been dragged down a staircase as the religious corporations once did with the impious Governor Bustamante. Those were indeed the days of faith."<sup>2</sup>

Before Rizal, there was the erudite Fr. José Burgos who, in his famous *Manifiesto* published anonymously in 1864 in defense of the Filipino priests whose parishes were being rapidly gobbled up by the friars, pointedly cited chapter and verse from the *Historia de Philipinas* regarding this same friar crime:

[T]he assassination in his own palace of him who was also Governor and captain general Don Fernando Bustamante Bustillo y Rueda, with his son, in a rebellion plotted in the church of the Augustinian fathers. In it, friars of all orders were seen with crucifixes in their hands accompanied by people of all classes shouting: "Long Live the faith of God!" "Long Live the church!"<sup>3</sup>

The incident very likely remains a delicate matter in devoutly Catholic Philippines to this day (consider some years ago the then Manila mayor's anachronistic reaction to the Hollywood movie *The Da Vinci Code*) and, in this context, one can surmise that in Hidalgo's time a painting graphically showing cassocked priests brutally murdering a Governor-General would have been viewed - as Rizal would entitle his first major literary work - as *noli me tangere* or untouchable.

The direct personal link between the Ilustrados of 1872 and Hidalgo is Antonio Maria Regidor who was one of those exiled over the Cavite Mutiny and the "Gomburza" incident. Escaping from his Marianas exile, Regidor subsequently made London his base from where he would commute to Paris and Madrid to talk politics with Rizal, the Pardo de Tavera family, Hidalgo, and other attentive Ilustrados.

Hidalgo's own personal brush with radical politics rewinds back to his student days in Manila at the University of Santo Tomas in 1869. As the poetic symmetry of history would have it, one of those whose ideas sparked that subsequent famous campus unrest was the very same person who more than 30 years later would urge Hidalgo to paint the Bustamante subject: Antonio Regidor.

A lawyer taking his doctorate in Canon Law at the time, Regidor had remarked to a student of law, Felipe Buencamino, on the absurdity of requiring the use of Latin textbooks for a profession where the *lingua franca* was, in fact, Spanish. Buencamino took it upon himself to do something about it. Called to recite the lesson for the day in his class in Canon Law, Buencamino delivered the entire lesson in Spanish instead of Latin! The flabbergasted professor Fr. Benito Corominas of the Dominican Order unceremoniously dismissed the class. The jubilant students spent their unexpected free hour by triumphantly hoisting Buencamino on their shoulders, and amidst yells of "*Viva el castellano y abajo el latin*" ("Long live Spanish and down with Latin") marched their new hero all the way back to his quarters on San Juan de Letran street.



Emboldened by this gesture of protest, Fr. Coromina's class was further stirred up in subsequent days by anonymously written leaflets attacking hand-kissing and other reverential postures that the students were required to assume in the presence of the Dominican professors. Soon enough, the contents of these mischievous, hand-written leaflets that littered the classroom floor in subsequent days escalated into attacks on the friars and demands for academic freedom. Never tolerant of the least show of disrespect from students, the university authorities reacted - or more accurately - over-reacted.

Far more than mere student adventurism was read into the incident. The university officials urged the Governor-General to do something about what they perceived to be a wider, more sinister plot extending beyond the campus and involving the entire colony. The subsequent state investigations implicated Buencamino (who spent some uncomfortable nights in jail) as well as a fistful of students and their parents residing as far away as Pampanga. Among the students placed under investigation was Félix Resurrección Hidalgo. His uncle and godfather, Fr. José Sabino Padilla, prebendary of the Manila Cathedral, had to intercede on his behalf.

In the end, nothing came out of all that particular Dominican university paranoia. Even the cheeky Buencamino was released. Recalling this incident in his book *El Progreso de Filipinas*, published more than a decade later in 1881, Gregorio Sancianco - one of those investigated along with Hidalgo in that notorious university incident - wrote that "after 9 or 11 months, the case was dropped when no one was charged of the crime of subversion, which was how the affair was qualified at first, unless one counts those few anonymous letters retrieved in the university wherein was clearly expressed the aims, or more precisely the legitimate aspirations of the students."<sup>4</sup>

Despite the sinister black mark on him, Hidalgo went on to complete his Bachelor in Civil Law degree a year and a half later in 1871. But this incident at the University of Santo Tomas was never put to rest by the suspicious peninsular Spaniards or peninsulares.

When native militia staged a revolt at the Cavite arsenal - a disturbance quickly quelled with the leaders summarily executed - it was immediately perceived as yet another opening salvo of some wider more sinister and violent nation-wide plot. Night arrests of "the usual suspects" followed and prominent citizens were quickly bundled off without legal recourse to exile in distant Guam (then part of the Spanish Philippines). Three eminent members of the native clergy were then publicly strangled to death without benefit of a trial. This Gomburza incident at Bagumbayan in 1872 already referred to above scarred the Ilustrado generation of Hidalgo. Its shadow would haunt the imagination of the leading propagandists such as Rizal and Marcelo del Pilar.

Returning to the specific case of Hidalgo, the incident may have made him extremely wary of openly provoking heavy-handed political retaliation. Hidalgo's awareness of the Gomburza incident was direct and personal. Hidalgo was closely acquainted with some of the victims of the 1872 episode: one of the Gomburza trio, Fr. Burgos, was a prominent teacher at the University of Santo Tomas who had approved Hidalgo's final examination to obtain his law degree, while among those exiled (along with Antonio Regidor) was Dr. Joaquin Pardo de Tavera, one of his examiners. Among his classmates was Paciano Rizal, the elder brother of José.

In Gomburza's wake, Hidalgo abruptly decided to abandon his newly earned lawyer's career to take up art at Manila's *Academia de Dibujo y Pintura* (Academy of Drawing and Painting). The artist he had now reinvented himself into, signed his paintings "Félix Resurrección" pointedly dropping off the Hidalgo surname, in the same way and for the same reason that José Rizal would shed his family name of Mercado. While Hidalgo had always wanted to be a painter, he now got the unstinting support of his mother for this career change - very likely because she hoped an artist's profession would keep him safely away from the brewing political typhoon.

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Young Félix did not come from a family of political agitators. Quite the contrary. His parents were conservative and respectable members of the *principalía* or local elite prospering in the commercial district of Binondo in Manila. His father, Eduardo Resurrección Hidalgo y Agapito, a *mestizo español* or Spaniard of mixed blood, was a wealthy lawyer from Vigan, Ilocos Sur, who had served as director of the *Dirrección Provisional de la Sociedad Postas Generales de Luzon* (Provisional Directorate of the General Postal Society of Luzon). His mother, Maria Barbara Padilla y Flores, a *mestiza de sangley* or Chinese of mixed blood from Binondo was an educated business woman, the proud daughter of lawyer and shipping magnate Narciso Padilla, who was no less than a *Regidor de la Audiencia Real* or a Regent of the Royal High Court of Manila. Her brother Sabino Padilla was a Catholic secular priest enjoying a pension at the Manila Cathedral.

Félix grew up on Calle de la Escolta in Binondo where he was born on February 21, 1853, the third of seven children. His mother, a deeply religious matriarch, doted on him from childhood, her hold over him growing ever more dominant following the death of her husband, an event that deprived Félix of a father figure at the young age of 12. Coming from a family of lawyers from both sides (his elder brother José was also a lawyer), it was taken for granted that Félix would also take up law upon completing his studies at the Ateneo de Manila. The obedient Félix followed this path, enrolling at the University of Santo Tomas in 1867 where he received top school marks of *sobresaliente* or excellent most of the time until he earned his Bachelor of Law degree in 1871. At the university, he had his first encounter with political radicalism, which, as described earlier, culminated in the 1872 Gomburza incident.

For the next seven years, Hidalgo stayed happily holed up within the walled city at the Academy of Drawing and Painting on Calle del Cabildo. His work, often marked *sobresaliente*, impressed the Academy's director, Agustin Saez, and in 1879 Hidalgo won a scholarship by means of an art competition to take up art studies in Spain. Earlier in 1876, Hidalgo had already exhibited at the Circo Teatro de Bilibid in Manila's Quiapo District.

Receiving his usual outstanding grades, Hidalgo continued his studies as a *pensionado* in Madrid for another four years until, finally bored stiff with the drudgery of the academic studio classes, he set off on his own in 1883. The following year, his painting *Virgenes Cristianas Expuestas al Populacho* won the ninth silver medal at the Madrid Exposition.



While it was a major accomplishment at the time, his compatriot Juan Luna did him one better by bagging the first gold medal for his gigantic *Spoliarium*. The double triumph of these two Filipinos was cause for jubilation among Madrid's Filipino colony, the more vocal propagandists marinating the cultural triumph with political significance in an evening of speechifying at the Restaurante Inglés.

Perhaps sniffing the strong political agenda in this much publicized dinner, Hidalgo had stayed in his new studio in Paris well away from the banquet in Madrid, claiming "sudden illness." Just the same, Hidalgo found himself once again linked with radical politics. Among the guests of honor was Segismundo Moret (who would become Minister of State the following year), a known liberal advocating autonomy for Cuba and Puerto Rico; Rafael Maria de Labra, a Cuban lawyer-journalist and vocal autonomist, and Miguel Morayta, a professor at the University of Madrid and staunch advocate of academic freedom.

Making his public debut into dangerous politics, José Rizal opened the round of toasts with this salvo:

Both [Luna and Hidalgo] express the spirit of our social, moral, and political life: humanity subjected to hard trials, humanity unredeemed, reason and aspiration in open fight with prejudice, fanaticism, and injustice; because feeling and opinion make their way through the thickest walls... and if the pen fails them and the printed word does not come to their aid, then the palette and the brush not only recreate the scenery, but are also eloquent advocates.<sup>5</sup>

The silver-tongued orator from Iloilo, Graciano Lopez Jaena, followed with his own remarks:

[T]he brush of Luna and the palette of Resurrección have once again given irrefutable proof that ability and genius are not just the exclusive patrimony of the races who title themselves superior; and that they are emblazoned within the repository of intellectual rights.... *Spoliarium* and *Virgenes Cristianas Expuestas al Populacho* are the expression of the laments and cries that are exhaled from the breasts of this race on whose head has been weighted for a long time the stigma of unjustified prejudices.<sup>6</sup>

There is evidence that Rizal respected and confided in Hidalgo, as one letter concerning Rizal's most significant political work tells us:

For a long time you [Hidalgo] have wished to read a novel by me. You said to me that it was necessary to do something serious and not write any more articles that live and die with the page of a newspaper. Very well, to your wishes, to your letters, I reply with my novel - *Noli Me Tangere* - of which I send you a copy by post... you have always encouraged me with your approval and advice. Stimulate further your friend who respects your opinions and your criticisms...<sup>7</sup>

To which Hidalgo replied:

I have read pages of your book and I have found them full of truth. There are scenes finely delineated with an absolutely remarkable exactness... I admire your courage in saying plainly what you think and the inspiration reflected in your work which makes one feel the palpitations of the heart of a man who loves his country....<sup>8</sup>

Writing to his German friend Blumentritt, Rizal remarked:

I thank both of you [Hidalgo and Blumentritt] for having understood my book. I wanted to write something for my people, and two souls who love Filipinos, have understood me. May my country also understand me as you and Hidalgo do! Other Filipinos who are not writers, also congratulated me, but your congratulations and Hidalgo's are worth more.<sup>9</sup>

No further elaboration regarding Hidalgo's political credentials is needed. The artist's strong character revealed itself in one of his letters where he reacted to the shabby treatment that the purchase of his prize-winning work received from officials:

Neither the pecuniary sacrifices, nor the laborious efforts of nearly a year, not even the thousands upon thousands of obstacles which I have had to overcome to bring my modest work to a good end, hurt me; but [the conduct of the] artists such as the Gentlemen of the Jury, among whom not a single one would not have expressed indignation if someone had proposed the purchase of one of their works under the conditions which they have drawn up for the acquisition of my painting, pains me; it wounds me in my most profound artistic sensibility. It angers me, I repeat, that the stipulations of its evaluation are derisive and shameful... they want to clip the wings of the young denying them whenever they can the material means to continue advancing.

Fortunately, I do not allow, nor will I allow, myself to be vanquished no matter how hard the struggle; and even in bankruptcy I will continue to make another work of importance even if I have to deprive myself of what is most necessary in life.<sup>10</sup>

Though low-profiled, Hidalgo when pressed always showed an inner toughness to his character. He certainly had to be tough to survive as an artist in highly competitive Paris. In his book, *The Studios of Paris*, art historian John Milner writes of Paris in those days when:

[I]ts artists numbered in thousands and when the annual Salon jury reduced its selection of works for display to a privileged 5,000-6,000 works. For an artist to assert his presence, and even to be seen at all amongst the multitude of warring styles and ambitions was a formidable task calling for resolute commitment and determination. Merely to survive as a painter was a difficult task; to succeed as a painter was an almost insuperable task, demanding cunning as well as talent, shrewdness as much as originality....<sup>11</sup>

The Paris of the last quarter of the 19th century to where Hidalgo moved was the Mecca of Western art. Its Bohemian atmosphere probably freed Hidalgo from the rigid social conventions of his religious family back in Manila. In any case, Hidalgo's unconventional relationship with his model, Maria Yrritia, who became his life's companion although he never married her, shows that Hidalgo was no timid, colorless personality.

Paris became Hidalgo's home for almost three decades. He returned to the Philippines in 1911 only to visit his ailing, nearly blind, mother. But he found the new Philippines, now under the Americans, just as stifling as in his youth - what with his companion Maria given no social status - and he travelled back to his beloved Paris only to die in Barcelona, Spain. From about 1884 to his death in March 12, 1913, Maria stood faithfully by his side.



Measuring an impressive 420 by 353 centimeters, the large oil on canvas of *El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante* was part of the artist's estate that went to his heirs, to then pass to the hands of Manuel Garcia before finally finding a home in the impressive art collection of Leandro and Cecilia Locsin.

In this final *magnum opus*, Hidalgo's neo-classical style had evolved towards a flatter surface, dispensing with the contrasts of dark and light which had earlier proved so effective in his *La Barca de Aqueronte*. In 1897, Hidalgo experimented with media and technique which he furtively called after himself as the "FRH procedure" (*procedimiento FRH*). He was trying to purge the "bitumen" (sometimes referred to as "brown sauce") coloration that characterized Academic painting.

I now find myself in possession of a procedure which permits me to dominate the material part of the work... I think I mentioned to you in one of my letters that I have succeeded in reconstructing the ancient procedure of the Flemish and Dutch masters which permit an artist to give to his works a brilliance and a solidity to colors to which the Moderns have barely arrived with their dirty and gross painting in oils!

...I suppose I don't have to tell you that I keep the secret for myself!...Through one of those providential coincidences I encountered [the solution to] the problem which, in its simplicity, I would have hardly tried to solve in this manner! ...when I think that we have persisted for more than a hundred years with the conviction that the paintings from Van Eyck to Rubens are painted in oil and I see authors burn the midnight oil to investigate why these works conserve themselves fresh in color as though they had been painted yesterday, and I see that my procedure has all the aspects of these works [so] that one could think it analogous to oil painting, and seeing that my procedure does not contain a single drop of oil; I become convinced with the ease with which an error can be perpetuated...!"<sup>12</sup>

One of Hídalgo's surviving sketchbooks contains a scribbled formula for what he labelled his *procedimiento*, which lists color pigment ground in water to be mixed with agglutinants. We are left to speculate just what these binding mediums were from his mention of varnish and alcohol on this list. Apparently he applied these in alternate layers. He cites a portrait of his mother painted in 1897 as an example of this new technique.

Through this self-discovered "procedure", Hidalgo rendered his work in clean colors, fine lines, and flat planes; applying brighter colors layered with watercolor-like transparency. Was *El Asesinato* created with this special medium and technique? Without benefit of chemical analysis, we can only speculate on how much of this *procedimiento FRH* was applied to *El Asesinato*; or whether it was completed with exclusive use of traditional oils. In any case, the effect he was striving for by 1897 was the "brilliance and solidity to colors" of the "Flemish and Dutch masters"; and in color and style, this particular Hidalgo opus differs from his other and earlier major works precisely along those parameters.

To take the opposite tack, were we to be critical and probe for aesthetic weakness, it would be in the comparatively plain style Hidalgo used to tackle such a strong subject. The subversive political overtones and the vicious nature of the assassination of a Governor-General by a mob instigated by angry friars in the dark of night, call for a deeper, more violent visual mood and atmosphere. Where are the rich contrasts of light and shadow, the conflicting dark and somber chiaroscuro tones that gave his best-known works, *Virgenes Cristianas* and *La Barca de Aqueronte*, their dramatic impact? It was the younger Hidalgo's talent for playing light and shadow to maximum emotional effect that gave us a

frightening glimpse in his masterpiece *La Barca* of Dante's Inferno. Lacking this pictorial mood and drama, the Bustamante picture takes on the qualities of explicit illustration at the expense of emotional depth and atmosphere.

The Hidalgo style in this painting may thus seem quaint and archaic to contemporary eyes and sensibilities attuned to visual art that has long departed from the anecdotal. But all work must be appraised in context, and the art of Hidalgo belongs to the age when Paris was the art center of the world, and the Salon and its high priests - strutting aloof and unaware that the dissident salon movement would ambush their glory and their conspicuous Salon presence - were at their zenith.

As prominent as Hidalgo was in Spain and Paris, he was but a small flame among much, much brighter lights of the likes of Jean-Léon Gérôme, Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier, Fernand Cormon, and Gustave Moreau who, among dozens of others, were the celebrities of the art world commanding astronomical prices and dictating artistic tastes from within the all-powerful French Academy known as the *Institut*. Alas, these famous, rich, socially lionized, bemedaled, cock-of-the-walk artists who held sway over the "City of Light" and the Western art scene in Hidalgo's day, lie mouldering in the dustbin of art history. How many recognize these names today? It was precisely in that last quarter of the 19th century that the French Impressionists were overturning the rules of the art game while the Academy had been looking down on these dissident artists. By the morning of the 20th century, the curators of many magnificent museums of the world would sheepishly hide major paintings of these Academic masters inside dank store rooms where once they had been proudly displayed - in their ornately carved gold-leafed frames - in the main exhibition halls of these very same temples of art.

As John Milner in *The Studios of Paris* observed only too succinctly:

Ernest Meissonier, [was] the most honored and successful artist of the late nineteenth century, whose aims and ambitions were as committed and determined as any of his contemporaries. Today he is a figure of greater obscurity. In a hundred years his reputation has largely vanished, despite all the splendours of his worldly success. In the histories of art he is rarely mentioned. There evidently lies a gulf between contemporary reputations and posthumous recognition. Painters and sculptors of the utmost diversity, commitment and professionalism have vanished by the hundred. Their works have been relegated from places of the highest honour to shadowy picture stores. With the passage of time their prices have plummeted from spectacular heights; their names are invoked as no more than a foil to the splendours of Impressionism and its heirs. Yet they were more than a background - they provided a highly visible and well-established foreground which time and criticisms have largely erased.

Not only has our view of history changed but in doing so it has become vastly simplified, obscuring the intricate diversity of the period to provide an image of the time of heroic struggle.<sup>13</sup>

The style of Hidalgo's painting of the murder of Governor-General Bustamante has to be seen in this context: the negative elements we see may well be our cultural perspective that now denies any merit not just to this work but all the major works of the most eminent artists of Hidalgo's day as well. In much the same way, appreciating French Rococo painting today requires special orientation; just as contemporary rap musicians may not be able to relate to traditional opera. Fashions and tastes change. In his novel, Rizal himself was



dismissive of the painting and religious subjects of early Filipino *miniaturismo* painters that now are proud treasures in Philippine museums.

As *El Asesinato* carries no date with the signature, one can only speculate on the precise moment when Hidalgo painted it. Did he paint this after the execution of his friend Rizal in 1896, and was this an offshoot of the tragedy? Or did the artist paint this after the demise of the Spanish regime in the Philippines, in effect after 1898 when he felt it had become safe to express his long repressed sentiments?

That Hidalgo chose a highly controversial anti-clerical theme for what may be his last major work, tells us some things about the artist. Firstly, that his stay in France had given him a dose of liberal thinking that would not have been possible to imbibe in the Philippines of the 19th century. Taking into account that his parents were devout Catholics, with one close uncle a member of the clergy, his willingness to append his name to an obviously politically-charged subject offensive to the all-powerful Catholic establishment in the Philippines sends a message that he stood opposed to what the propagandist Marcelo del Pilar termed the “fairocracy” (*frailocracia*) in the Philippines.

The second point about this painting is that it reveals Hidalgo’s unequivocal political viewpoint identifying with the generation of 1872. The fact that this subject matter had been suggested to him by Antonio Maria Regidor - one of those who chose to live in London following their exile in Guam over the Cavite Mutiny of 1872 - cements this link. To fully appreciate the emotive component in *El Asesinato* it is important to appraise the subject of this painting as the Ilustrados of Hidalgo’s generation perceived it: as an icon symbolically linked with Gomburza and the Ilustrado struggle against the despotic power of the friarocracy.

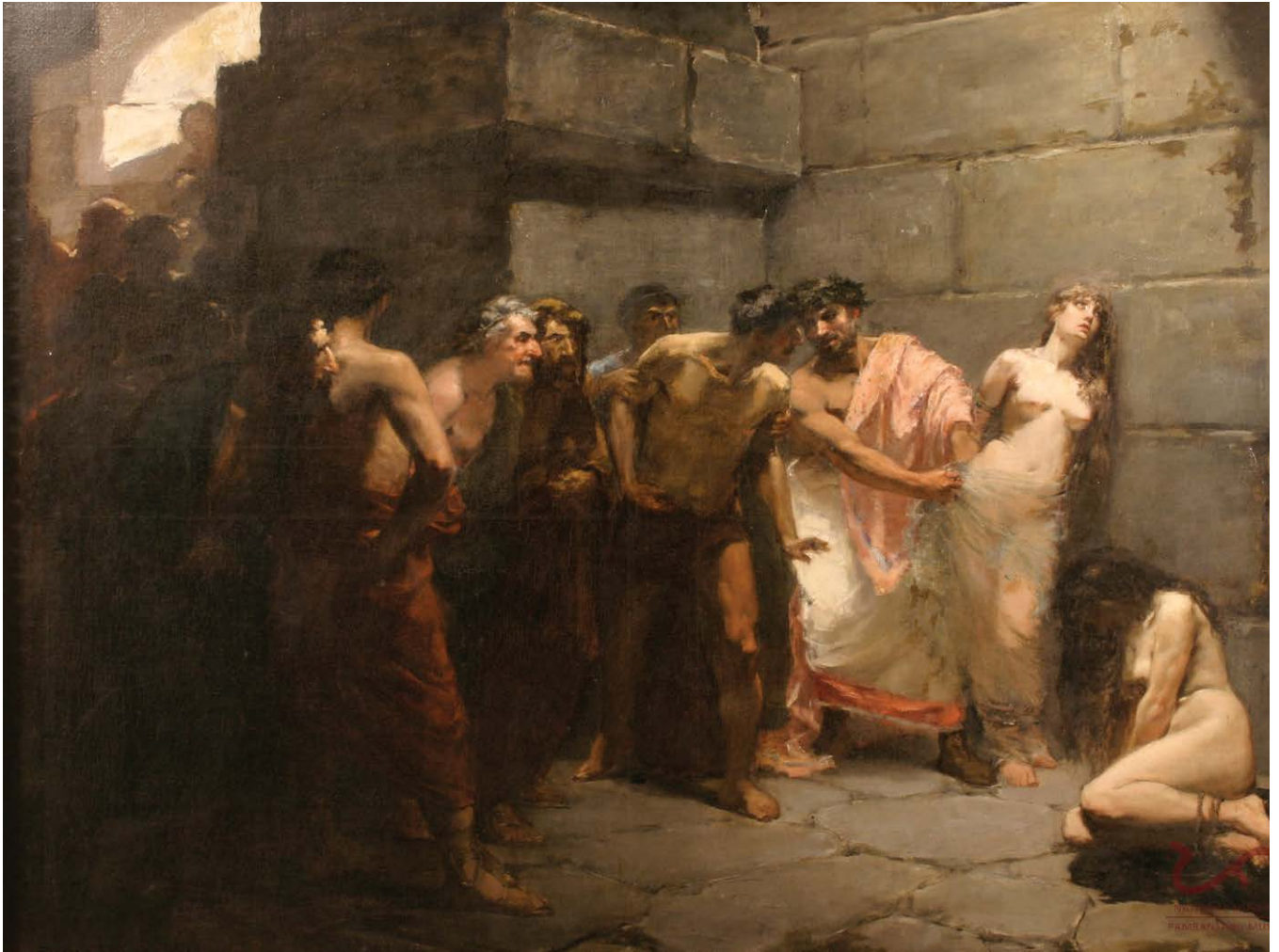
The mere portrayal of such an anti-clerical subject, a dark part of Philippine history, required great courage. Somehow Regidor had persuaded Hidalgo to work on this iconic subject and very likely provided much of its vivid historical details. You only have to look at the poses and faces of the friars (some viciously dragging a rope to which the hapless governor is tied) in the many studies now in the Lopez Memorial Museum and Library (some drawn in charcoal, others brushed in oil) to sense how the artist carefully mulled and constructed this macabre scene in his mind. The many meticulous studies also attest to the seriousness and importance he gave towards its final conception.

Hidalgo’s opus is a signpost to a significant chapter of Philippine history. In this historical light it is a national treasure. Indeed, this was officially acknowledged when *El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante* was declared a National Cultural Treasure by the National Museum of the Philippines on 1 October 1974 during its inaugural public exhibition in the country - the first Philippine work of art to be given this highest of recognitions.

## NOTES

- 1 Postscript to a letter from José Rizal to his brother Paciano, Madrid, 13 February 1883: *Cartas entre Rizal y los Miembros de la Familia*, Comisión Nacional del Centenario de José Rizal, Manila, 1961.
  - 2 José Rizal, *Noli me Tangere*, Comisión Nacional el Centenario de José Rizal, Manila, 1961, p8.
  - 3 *Historia de Philipinas*, chapter 20, p338, and chapter 24, p457, cited in John Schumacher, S.J.: *Father José Burgos, Priest And Nationalist*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1972, p105.
  - 4 Gregorio Sancianco y Goson, *El Progreso de Filipinas*, Madrid, 1881.
  - 5 Graciano Lopez Jaena, *Discursos y Articulos Varios*, Bureau of Printing, Manila, 1951.
  - 6 Ibid.
  - 7 José Rizal, *Rizal's Correspondence with Fellow Reformists 1882-1896*, Volume II, Book III, National Heroes Commission, Manila, 1963.
  - 8 José Rizal, *The Rizal-Blumentritt Correspondence*, Manila, José Rizal Centennial Commission, Manila, 1961, pp67-68.
  - 9 Ibid.
  - 10 Félix Resurrección Hidalgo, "Letter to Francisco de Yriarte", 15 August 1884, courtesy of Ramon N. Villegas.
  - 11 John Milner, *The Studios of Paris*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1988, p1.
  - 12 Félix Resurrección Hidalgo, "Letter to Pedro" [no surname], undated, from the Alfonso T. Ongpin Papers, courtesy of Ambeth R. Ocampo.
  - 13 John Milner: *The Studios of Paris*, op.cit.
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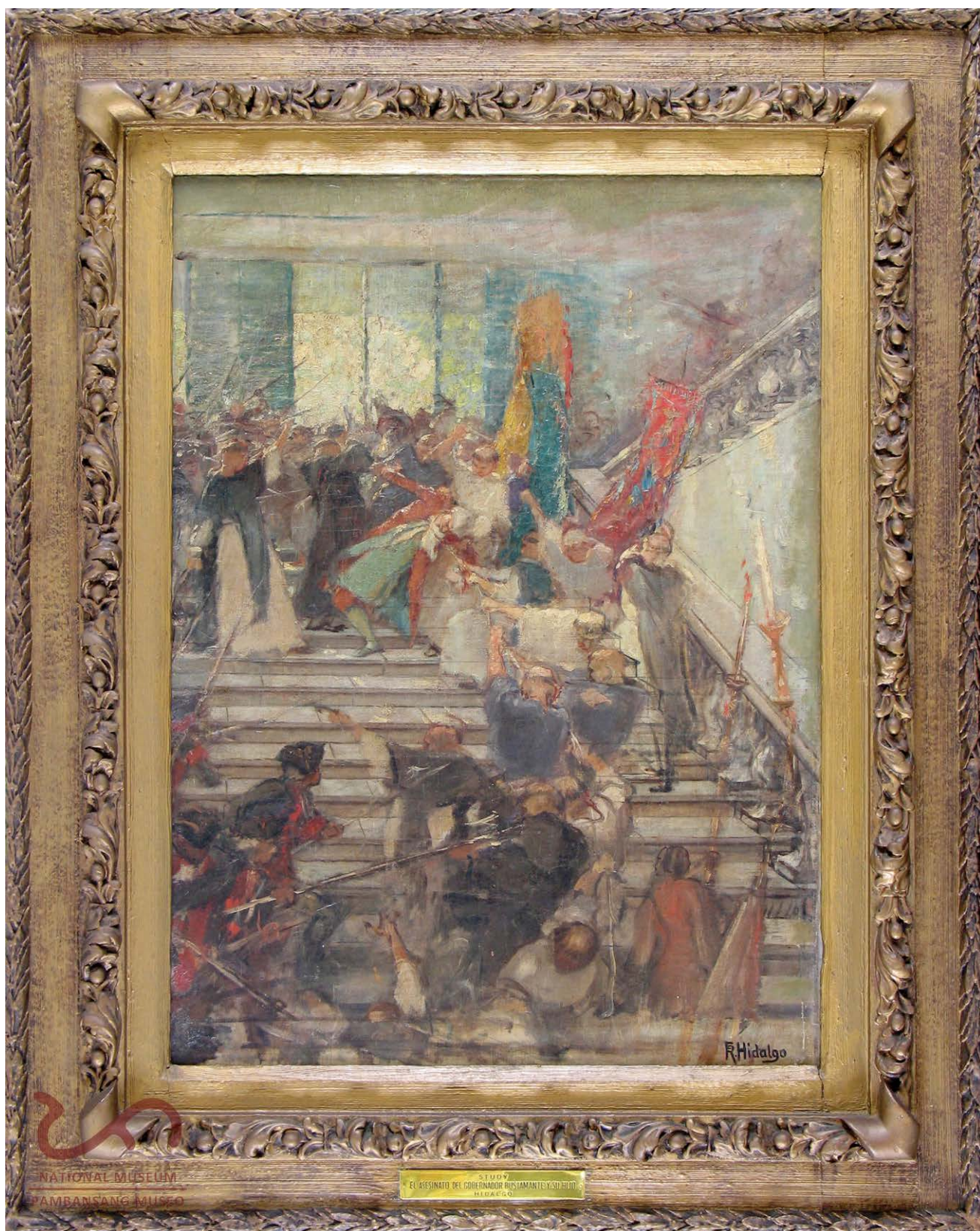
***Virgenes Cristianas Expuestas al Populacho***

(1884, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas)



*La Barca de Aqueronte*  
(1887, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas)





A study in oil of the complete composition of *El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante*  
(Lopez Memorial Museum and Library)



## ART HISTORICAL NOTES ON THE PAINTING *EL ASESINATO DEL GOBERNADOR BUSTAMANTE*

Pearlie Rose S. Baluyut\*

Philippine-born Spaniard Antonio Maria Regidor, one of the “principal leaders of the liberal lay reformist group” arrested with other priests in 1872<sup>1</sup> and, later, the lawyer and author associated with the *Ilustrados* and the Propaganda Movement in Europe, commissioned Félix Resurrección Hidalgo to paint a monumental canvas in oil which bore the original title *La Iglesia Contra el Estado*. According to Ambeth Ocampo, who has attempted to raise awareness of the painter’s significance in Philippine art through his newspaper column, Hidalgo himself changed the title to *El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante*.<sup>2</sup>

Like the propagandist José Rizal, Regidor was a mason and anti-cleric who was interested in the event of October 11, 1719: the assassination at the Palacio del Gobernador in Intramuros of Fernando Manuel de Bustillo Bustamante y Rueda, the Spanish Governor-General of the Philippines from 1717 to 1719.<sup>3</sup> One of Governor-General Bustamante’s official duties was to conduct an investigation of the colony’s depleting royal treasury, which was discovered to be usurped by the friars who “borrowed heavily from the government and from the [funds of the] *obras pias*,” or the pious foundations financed by the government through the profits made from the galleon trade and “entrusted to lay brotherhoods affiliated with religious orders or chapters.”<sup>4</sup>

According to historian John Foreman,

Several individuals charged with heinous crimes had taken church asylum and defied the civil power and justice. The Archbishop [Fr. Francisco de la Cuesta] was appealed to, to hand them over to the civil authorities, or allow them to be taken. He refused to do either, supporting the claim of immunity of sanctuary.<sup>5</sup>

As a result, Governor-General Bustamante charged Archbishop de la Cuesta, as well as those who sought sanctuary inside the Church, with government conspiracy and imprisoned them in a fortress.<sup>6</sup> The flames were fanned for a rebellion, and the popular anecdote by historians Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson sensationally describes the “partisans of the merchants, the retainers of the friars, and guilty officialdom” rallied by the Augustinians, Dominicans, Franciscans, and Recollects marching together toward the palace and committing the assassination evidently sanctioned by the Church.<sup>7</sup> Governor-General Bustamante, however, was not the first of the “gubernatorial casualties” in an epoch when “monastic supremacy was a fact of life that the king’s representatives had to live with.”<sup>8</sup> Indeed, what makes Hidalgo’s *El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante* significant is its critique of sacred and secular power gone awry, a visualization of colonial madness in the age of reason.<sup>9</sup>

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According to one source, “The young Hidalgo, obsessed by the drama and the historical nuance of the violent event, worked on the painting in Barcelona, Spain.”<sup>10</sup> Studies in the form of several extant charcoal drawings, as well as in oil on canvas and wood, provide a glimpse of Hidalgo’s fidelity to his initial concept, revealing his academic approach.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, he must have drawn inspiration from the paintings in the Museo del Prado which he saw during his studies at the Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid. In his letter to José Rizal and Glicerio Anson on October 15, 1879, Hidalgo expresses his admiration for the museum, as well as his artistic impotence:

I do not want to tell you about the Museum because I have no more time. I will only tell you that it contains the most valuable collection of paintings, more than 3,000, that is found in Europe. One leaves that building with a headache and despair in the soul, because one is convinced of the little he knows, that one is not even an atom compared with the colossi of art.<sup>12</sup>

It is not a surprise that the resulting *El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante* contains clear art historical references to two painters from Flanders: Rogier van der Weyden of the Northern Renaissance in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and Peter Paul Rubens of the Baroque in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

First, Governor-General Bustamante’s pose is identical to Van der Weyden’s lifeless Christ, particularly its contorted anatomy albeit in reverse, as seen in *The Descent from the Cross* (ca. 1435) in the Museo del Prado. Hidalgo must have also remembered the several canvases that Rubens executed for King Philip IV of Spain and other patrons and monarchs elsewhere. In fact, *El Asesinato* is identical to the grand scale, dynamism, and drama of Rubens’ most famous altarpiece, *The Elevation of the Cross* (1610-1611), a colossal triptych in the gothic Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp, which Hidalgo might have seen *in situ* if not as a facsimile. The forces and counterforces - the twisting, pushing, and pulling - surrounding Rubens’ crucified Christ are all present in Hidalgo’s painting.

Trained early at the Academia de Dibujo y Pintura in Manila to study customary casts, copies, and print reproductions derived no less than from originals in the Museo del Prado, Hidalgo mastered mimicry in the Philippines and mimicked the masters in Europe.<sup>13</sup> While *mimesis* (imitation) and *techne* (skill) constituted art and its development since antiquity, mimicry, in the context of (post)colonial discourse, can be construed as *difference* amid resemblance - an “ironic compromise.”<sup>14</sup> In his influential study on literary and cultural theory, Homi Bhaba argues that mimicry is a “sign of double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which ‘appropriates’ the Other as it visualizes power.”<sup>15</sup> In the process of the marginal mimicking the monumental, ambivalence, however, ensues. The effect of mimicry performed by the colonized subject, thus, is no longer flattering, but potentially disturbing - a “mockery” and “menace” - to the colonial authority.<sup>16</sup>

Hidalgo cleverly appropriated the Flemish representations of the passion and death of Christ, a popular iconographic subject deployed by the Catholic Church as part of their propaganda during the Counter-Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries in Italy and Spain. This borrowing, which had become common among 19<sup>th</sup>-century French Impressionist painters like Edouard Manet, was aesthetically subversive, predating the strategy of postmodern art of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, the biblical text prefigured

the art historical context of power struggle between colonial authorities: the church and state. While Hidalgo tendentiously changed the civilian and religious mob to - exclusively - grotesquely deformed and tonsured friars, he also cast Governor-General Bustamante - ironically - as the Church's victim, Christ-like in his descent from the grand staircase and death by treason.

Hidalgo's preoccupation with the subject matter is corroborated by the colors he has chosen, which are derived from *El Gobernador y el Obispo* (The Governor [Luis Pérez Dasmariñas] and the Bishop [Domingo de Salazar]), an oil painting he executed in Paris in 1896 and now in collection of the National Museum after it was exhibited for many decades in Malacañan Palace, the official seat of the presidents of the Philippines and of the governors-general before them.<sup>17</sup> Literally dipping his paintbrush in the inkwell of Governor-General Dasmariñas, who is shown listening closely to the 84-year-old Dominican bishop, ready to sign the papers dispatching a military expedition to aid the Kingdom of Cambodia which had been invaded by its neighbor Siam in 1594, Hidalgo reused the varying shades and tints of orange, yellow, green, and blue found on the surface and mouth of the white porcelain, as well as the pile of books and the table mantle.<sup>18</sup>

The viewer is dazzled by the 18<sup>th</sup>-century costume of Governor-General Bustamante who is being dragged with a rope along the steps of the white stone staircase with balustrades. Suited in the latest mode, he wears a Persian orange, collarless, silk coat with gold ornamentation, deep cuffs, and unfastened buttons, revealing a white ruffled shirt with matching wrist ruffs. The underside of his coat is painted in Paris Green, a poisonous pigment favored by the French Impressionists. This same color is adopted to render the clasped waistcoat and matching baldric that once held his belatedly drawn sword; both are trimmed with bands in saffron. Foreshortened, the Persian orange breeches taper into a pair of teal silk stockings and olive green leather shoes with ornamental silver stock buckles. Finally, the personification of the King's majesty is crowned with a white wig and his hands are gloved in white as well.

The predominant complementary colors of Governor-General Bustamante's richly ornamented costume are then magnified in the pageantry of cascading processional banners embroidered with the icons of the Church. Together with the dark blue and sanguine red of the halberdiers' uniforms, which convey the calculated hesitation and boldness in betraying their superior, and the black-and-white silhouettes of the friars robed in the traditional colors of their Orders - coincidentally somber and severe as characteristic of Spanish taste of the preceding centuries - the wide staircase is transformed into a veritable fashion runway made more rhythmic by a variety of lethal accessories, "some of which were supplied by the *conventos*": polearms, knives, and, of course, crucifixes.<sup>19</sup>

Hidalgo's conspicuous palette is a translation of modernity, particularly his own 19<sup>th</sup>-century bourgeois sensibilities. According to his relatives in Manila, Hidalgo was "quite a dandy in Paris."<sup>20</sup> A subject normalized by the visual contradiction presented by the Haussmannized *Ville Lumière* where Hidalgo resided, the dandy embodied the modern myth as a "spectacle."<sup>21</sup> As a historical figure of modernity, the dandy was a bourgeois imitating the lifestyle of an aristocrat, occupying much of his time cultivating his appearance through the latest in fashion and domestic accouterments, social milieu, and



***El Gobernador y el Obispo***

(1896, National Museum of the Philippines)



cultural associations with artists, writers, and actors. Hidalgo's photographs taken in his studio identify him as a laboring painter-turned-dandy, a reinvention.

Applied in loose brushstrokes to produce a matte finish, which characterizes the versatility of oil-based paints, and a flattened effect that are hallmarks of French impressionism, *El Asesinato* bathes in diffused light. The luminous effect of natural light coming from the large open windows might correspond to Hidalgo's desire to (over)expose darkness in his pursuit of Enlightenment, which German philosopher Immanuel Kant defines in his 1784 essay as "man's release from his self-incurred tutelage."<sup>22</sup> Indeed, Hidalgo even changed the time of the assassination from evening to morning and rendered the interior scene as if *en plein air*.<sup>23</sup>

Despite José Rizal's "hailing" of Hidalgo for his prize-winning canvas, *Virgenes Cristianas Expuestas al Populacho*, in Madrid in 1884 - or what French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser refers to as "interpellation" which constituted and, thus, bound Hidalgo as an "always-already subject" of an "imagined community" - the painter's involvement with the Propaganda Movement has since been considered marginal if not non-existent.<sup>24</sup>

The political sentiments Hidalgo expressed unequivocally in *El Asesinato* (and perhaps also, more subtly, in *El Gobernador y el Obispo*) could be construed as "avant-garde," a term which, according to art historian Linda Nochlin, was invented between 1830 to 1880, preceding and outdating the Second Empire's official realism in France, and "first used figuratively to designate radical or advanced activity in both artistic and social realms."<sup>25</sup> An avant-garde painter in *fin-de-siècle* Paris, thus, stood for progressiveness - one who lived in one's time. Yet like his contemporary Juna Luna, the bemedaled painter of *Spoliarium* of 1884,<sup>26</sup> Hidalgo had trepidation.

According to the National Museum's exhibition program brochure in 1974, Hidalgo "did not dare show this in Barcelona, where it was kept rolled and stored in his atelier, for fear that the subject might evoke controversy."<sup>27</sup> On a personal level, it was an understandable decision given that his mother, Maria Barbara Padilla, "was a devoted Catholic."<sup>28</sup> Writer Alfredo Roces similarly echoes that the Hidalgos were "fervent Catholics."<sup>29</sup> In addition, Hidalgo's maternal uncle José Sabino Padilla was a man of the cloth who pleaded for his welfare after undergoing through the investigations conducted by the University of Santo Tomas and Governor-General Carlos Maria de la Torre from 1869 to 1870.<sup>30</sup> Hidalgo's fear of controversy might have been exacerbated by imminent censorship given the authority and power enjoyed by the Church in the colony, despite the fact that it ceased to be under Spain's protection after the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1898.

Thus, unlike the popular *pasyon* whose ritual reading and dramatization of Jesus Christ's story by the natives served as a "mirror of the collective consciousness" of the oppressed and, according to the pioneering work of historian Reynaldo Ileto, ignited and sustained the peasant revolutions from 1840 to 1910 "despite the absence of *ilustrado* leadership," *El Asesinato* prevented the viewer's identification with Governor-General Bustamante as the victim and empowerment as the resurrected savior precisely because of its inaccessibility.<sup>31</sup> With the exception of its exhibition in 1904 at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, Missouri in the United States where it garnered a gold medal, the painting was never seen in public.<sup>32</sup>

Like the anonymous, solitary, and brown-skinned *indio* who has turned his back away and stands immobile, possibly stunned by the unfolding epic of colonial trauma, Hidalgo could be seen as a witness to the self-destruction of the Spanish empire through its representatives in the colony. This acolyte, who wears a transparent white surplice over a cassock in cardinal red (the very color lifted from the velvet doublet and, in varying shades, the embroidered jerkin and panes of the black trunk hose worn by Governor-General Luis Pérez Dasmariñas whose ruffed exquisite head later rolled in the hands of the Chinese who also assassinated his father, Governor-General Gomez Pérez Dasmariñas, in 1593) holds aloft the golden cross.<sup>33</sup> Next to him at the bottom right corner, Hidalgo paints in pale red his signature whose superimposed capital letters “F” and “R,” which almost resemble the Greek-derived Chi-Rho (“XP”) emblematic of Jesus’ crucifixion, naturally contains the initial “R” for “Resurrección.” A new testament and century await.

When Hidalgo died on March 13, 1913, his remains and works were arranged for repatriation from Spain to the Philippines by the affluent Valentin Ventura with Maria Yrriarte, Hidalgo’s lifelong model-turned-companion in Paris, as escort to this “homecoming” event, which was covered by the pre-war weekly *El Renacimiento Filipino*.<sup>34</sup> The rolled canvas of *El Asesinato* made its way to the Hidalgo residence in Manila the following year. According to journalist Margot Baterina, the painting remained in its original case for 51 years.<sup>35</sup>

Hidalgo’s painting is reported to have been “restored by painter Antonio Dumlao and bought by art collector Manuel L. Garcia for P250,000” sometime in 1965 from Hidalgo’s nephew (i.e., the son of Félix’s brother, José Hidalgo) and “only known heir,” Felipe Kleimpell Hidalgo, who was described by his neighbors, relatives, and/or associates as “eccentric,” “miserly” or, in some cases, generous, but “always suspicious of callers who want[ed] to see the Hidalgo paintings.”<sup>36</sup> After selling it to Garcia, Baterina narrates, “Don Felipe was known to have refused any prospective buyer of Hidalgo paintings.”<sup>37</sup> She adds that “[w]hile he was alive, no one could touch the paintings, whether hanging or unrolled.”<sup>38</sup>

In August 1974, Garcia, “motivated by his nationalistic attitude,” together with Dumlao and Jesse Bello, who were both “imbued with an equally intense sense of nationalism,” informed Godofredo L. Alcasid, Sr., Director of the National Museum from 1971 to 1980, about Hidalgo’s valuable art collections for “the opportunity to publicly exhibit the painting.”<sup>39</sup> In reality, the National Museum failed at that time to acquire it for the nation given the customary budgetary constraints.<sup>40</sup>

This general predicament explains why Garcia sold *El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante* to architect Leandro V. Locsin and his wife Cecilia, both collectors of art, for 2 million pesos (although the 1974 program states that Garcia “caused the transfer of said painting in 1971 to the residence of Architect and Mrs. Leandro Locsin for safe-keeping”).<sup>41</sup>

In October 1974, *El Asesinato* was loaned, unveiled, and exhibited for the first time in the country at the National Museum during the National Museum Week celebration.<sup>42</sup> Curiously, on this occasion, it was given the new title of *La Tragedia del Gobernador Bustamante* (The Tragedy of Governor Bustamante). Speculations that the substitution of the more ambiguous word “tragedy” for the nefarious crime was intended to diminish any historical culpability on the part of the Church ensued.

Persuaded by the legendary charm and diplomacy of First Lady Imelda Marcos, Felipe Kleimpell Hidalgo acquiesced to step out of his two-storey Quiapo hideaway at 609 J. Nepomuceno Street (formerly Tanduay) and attend the event, which was considered “one of his rare public appearances” until his mysterious death and quick burial in 1979.<sup>43</sup> Besides Felipe Kleimpell Hidalgo, who assisted the First Lady and Flora N. Alcasid with the unveiling, “one of [his] six children from two marriages” living on the ground floor, the engineer Rafael R. Hidalgo,<sup>44</sup> was also present to give a response to Director Alcasid’s “reading of the Designation of the Mural [*sic*] as a National Cultural Treasure,” the first work of art to be declared as such in the Philippines.<sup>45</sup> The program was concluded with the laying of a wreath at the Hidalgo Mausoleum at Manila North Cemetery.<sup>46</sup>

The painting retreated to storage again until 1988 when the Locsin family loaned it to the Metropolitan Museum of Manila for the First National Juan Luna and Félix Resurrección Hidalgo Commemorative Exhibition.<sup>47</sup> In November 2003, *El Asesinato* found its way back to the National Museum where, through the generous donation of Mrs. Cecilia Locsin, it was restored and given a permanent place among the exhibitions of the national fine arts collections that are held in trust by the National Museum for the Filipino people.<sup>48</sup>

Knowledge of the original title, *La Iglesia Contra el Estado*, and the conventional title that depicts the actual event of October 11, 1719, *El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante*, together with its art historical analysis provide the necessary scholarly context to understand the longstanding relationship between the church and the state in the Philippines and, more importantly, Félix Resurrección Hidalgo’s negotiated agency, thereby fulfilling the National Museum’s mandate as a dynamic cultural and educational institution.<sup>49</sup>

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## NOTES

- 1 John Schumacher, S.J., *Revolutionary Clergy: The Filipino Clergy and the Nationalist Movement, 1850-1903*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, 1989, pp18 and 31-32.
- 2 Ambeth Ocampo, “Murder in 1719,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, October 15, 2010.
- 3 John Foreman, *The Philippine Islands*, 3rd ed., T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1906, pp61-62.
- 4 Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* (Pre-Spanish – 1941), Quezon City, 2009, Vol. 1, p78, and Benito J. Legarda, Jr., *After the Galleons: Foreign Trade, Economic Change, and Entrepreneurship in the Nineteenth-Century Philippines*, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City, 1999, pp43-44.
- 5 Foreman, op. cit.: 61.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, Arthur H. Clark, Cleveland, 1903-1919, Vol. XLIV, p200.
- 8 Constantino, op. cit.



- 9 Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, translated by Richard Howard, Vintage Books, New York, 1988.
- 10 "La Iglesia Contra el Estado," *New Philippines*, November 1974, p15.
- 11 *A Guide to Luna and Hidalgo Paintings in the Lopez Memorial Museum*, Eugenio Lopez Foundation, Inc., Pasay City, 1979, pp56-59.
- 12 As cited in Ambeth Ocampo, "The Education of Hidalgo," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, October 7, 2008.
- 13 Ibid. A redacted version of Hidalgo's letter also appears in Santiago A. Pilar, *Juan Luna: The Filipino as Painter*, Vera-Reyes, Inc., Manila, 1980, pp61-62 and Patrick Flores, *Painting History: Revisions in Philippine Colonial Art*, U.P. Office of Research Coordination and National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Manila, 1998, pp250-251.
- 14 Homi K. Bhaba, "Of Mimicry and Man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse," *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, New York, 1994, p86.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Ibid., pp86-89.
- 17 This painting is reproduced in *Priceless Artworks: A Museum Handbook for Teachers* as part of the *Teacher's Guide: National Museum Visual Arts Collection* educational kit produced by the National Museum in 2003.
- 18 Originally published in 1609 as *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* by Antonio de Morga and annotated by José Rizal in 1890.
- 19 Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, op. cit.
- 20 Ambeth Ocampo, "Piecing together Hidalgo's Past," *Looking Back*, Anvil Publishing, Inc., Pasig City, 1996, p181, which originally appeared in his column on March 2, 1989.
- 21 Appointed by Emperor Napoleon III as chief engineer, Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann rebuilt Paris "to give modernity a shape, and he seemed at that time to have a measure of success in doing so: he built a set of forms in which the city appeared to be visible, even intelligible: Paris, to repeat the formula, was becoming a spectacle." T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1999, p66.
- 22 Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Donald Preziosi, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, p70.
- 23 Mallat's description in his 1846 publication contradicts the evening setting provided by most 20<sup>th</sup>-century sources. Jean Mallat, *The Philippines: History, Geography, Customs, Agriculture, Industry and Commerce of the Spanish Colonies in Oceania*, translated by Pura Santillan-Castrencia in collaboration with Lina S. Castrencia, National Historical Institute, Manila, 1983, p53.
- 24 Rizal's speech is reprinted in "The Art of Luna and Hidalgo," *New Philippines*, November 1974, p24. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)," *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, translated by Ben Brewster, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1971, pp173-175. Referring to nation-formation, the term "imagined community" is borrowed from Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London, 1993.
- 25 Linda Nochlin, *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society*, Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1989, p2.
- 26 Pearlle Rose S. Baluyut, "Juan Luna in Paris, 1884-1893: A Representation and Narrative of Becoming," unpublished M.A. thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1997.
- 27 "*La Tragedia del Gobernador Bustamante*" by Félix Resurrección Hidalgo: *First Public Exhibition*, National Museum, Manila, 1974, non-paginated.
- 28 Ibid.

- 29 Alfredo Roces, *Félix Resurrección Hidalgo and the Generation of 1872*, Eugenio Lopez Foundation, Inc., Pasig City, 1998, p11.
- 30 Ibid., pp26-32.
- 31 Reynaldo Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, 1989, pp8, 12.
- 32 “*La Tragedia del Gobernador Bustamante*,” op. cit., and *Art Philippines*, edited by Juan T. Gatbonton, Jeannie E. Javelosa, and Lourdes Ruth R. Roa, The Crucible Workshop, Pasig City, 1992, p50. Ocampo, however, claims that this painting was “never exhibited in Hidalgo’s lifetime.” See Ocampo: “Murder in 1719,” op. cit.
- 33 Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, op. cit.
- 34 Margot J. Baterina, “The Death of the Lone Heir of Félix Resurrección Hidalgo Paints a Grotesque Picture of Greed for National Treasures,” *Philippine Panorama*, Vol. 9, No. 27, July 6, 1980, pp6-7; Ambeth Ocampo, “The Sad Hidalgo-Yrritia Affair,” *Looking Back*, Anvil Publishing, Inc., Pasig City, 1996, p144, which originally appeared in his column on November 11, 1987; and *A Guide to Luna and Hidalgo Paintings in the Lopez Memorial Museum*, op. cit.: p60. Also, Ocampo’s “Recuerdos de Patay,” in *Rizal Without the Overcoat*, Anvil Publishing, Inc., Pasig City, 1998, p45, which originally appeared in his column on October 1, 1989.
- 35 Baterina, op. cit., p12.
- 36 “*La Tragedia del Gobernador Bustamante*,” op. cit., and Baterina, op. cit., pp7, 9, 12-13, and 42. The painting’s provenance lists Manuel Garcia as the second owner in Santiago A. Pilar, “Catalogue Raisonné: Resurrección Hidalgo y Padilla, Félix Eduardo – Filipino Grand Lyricism,” *Unang Pambansang Eksibisyon sa Paggunita kina Juan Luna at Félix Resurrección Hidalgo (First National Juan Luna and Félix Resurrección Hidalgo Commemorative Exhibition)*, Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Manila, 1988, p156.
- 37 Baterina, op. cit., p13.
- 38 Ibid., p9.
- 39 “*La Tragedia del Gobernador Bustamante*,” op. cit., p36.
- 40 Pearlie Rose S. Baluyut, *Institutions and Icons of Patronage: Arts and Culture in the Philippines during the Marcos Years, 1965-1986*, University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, Manila, 2012, pp81-82.
- 41 “*La Tragedia del Gobernador Bustamante*,” op. cit., and Baterina, op.cit., p12. Baterina does not name the buyer, but her “noted architect” description is sufficient to historically identify Leandro Locsin.
- 42 Ibid., and Pilar, op. cit., p156.
- 43 Baterina, op. cit., pp6-7, 13.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 “*La Tragedia del Gobernador Bustamante*,” op. cit., and Resolution No. 2 of the National Museum dated October 1, 1974.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 See the exhibition catalogue, *Unang Pambansang Eksibisyon*, op. cit.
- 48 Deed of Conditional Donation signed by Mrs. Cecilia Yulo Locsin and the National Museum on November 15, 2003.
- 49 Ambeth Ocampo, “Church against State,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, December 11, 2012.



Studies in charcoal for *El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante*, showing (this page and overleaf), the friar grouping pulling on the rope, and (succeeding pages), the falling body of Bustamante, both alone and in the context of the immediately surrounding ensemble of friar figures.

(Lopez Memorial Museum and Library)

















Studies first in charcoal (preceding page) and later in oil (this page) for the same figure of the Dominican friar that dramatically dominates the upper left portion of the composition.

(Lopez Memorial Museum and Library)





Further studies in oil for *El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante* (this page and the succeeding pages) indicate that Hidalgo was meticulous in the conceptualization and construction of this work.

(Lopez Memorial Museum and Library)

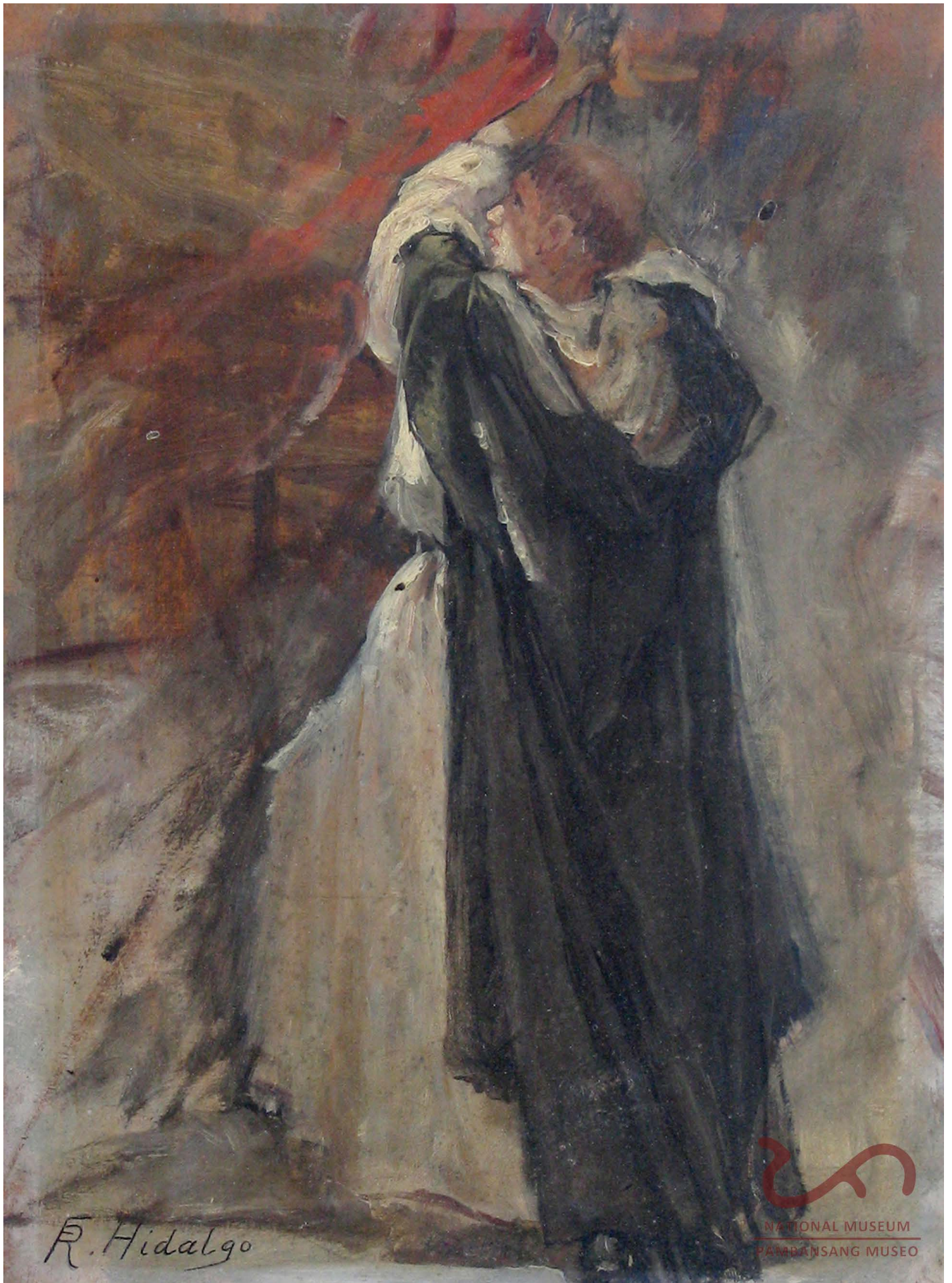
















NATIONAL MUSEUM  
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## CONSERVING AND RESTORING A NATIONAL CULTURAL TREASURE

### *EL ASESINATO DEL GOBERNADOR BUSTAMANTE*

Orlando V. Abinion, Roberto A. Balarbar,  
Willie E. Estonanto, and Raymundo T. Esguerra\*

#### DETAILS OF THE PAINTING

- TITLE:** *El Asesinato del Gobernador Bustamante* (The Assassination of Governor Bustamante), also known as *La Iglesia Contra el Estado* (The Church Against the State).
- ARTIST:** Félix Resurrección Hidalgo (February 21, 1853 – March 13, 1913).
- DATE:** Undated.
- MEDIUM:** Oil on canvas.
- SIGNATURE:** “F R Hidalgo”, located at bottom right of the Painting.
- SIZE:** Height 165.5 inches (420.4 cm); width 139.0 inches (353.1 cm).
- OWNER:** National Museum, through the donation by Cecilia Yulo-Locsin in memory of Leandro V. Locsin.

#### CONDITION OF THE PAINTING

The primary support of the Painting was canvas in simple tabby weave and of medium thickness. This canvas did not show any seam or stitching. It was woven as a single large piece. The textile was chemically and physically unstable. A pH of 4.5 confirmed that the textile turned acidic with time, either intrinsically or extrinsically. The acidity caused the fabric to become weak and fragile, and it deteriorated as manifested by tears, scratches, and abrasions in different areas of the Painting. Some edges of the canvas were slightly frayed, perhaps due to repeated folding, rolling, and the fastening and unfastening of tacks each time the Painting was mounted for display. Holes and rips caused by nails were apparent on the edges. There were also stains, due most probably to an acidic source on the canvas. Some alterations also resulted from deficient handling, transport, and storage.

White ground was thinly applied over the support. The ground formed as a connecting link between the support and the paint layers. It also provided a uniform absorbency

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foundation and uniform surface texture on the support. Physical examination through hand lens showed that some of the ground had eroded in areas where paint losses were present.

The Painting was executed in oil in thin and dark colors, which dominated the image. In general, the paint layer had good adherence and cohesion with the other layers; however, there was evidence of flaking due perhaps to mechanical damages and the acidity of the textile. These flakes were dispersed and did not form a single pattern. Surface chalking, localized craquelures, cupping, and other forms of cleavage were apparent around the paint stratum. Some were caused by abrasions while others were due to the tacking of the paint edges, especially at the top and base of the Painting. There were also some stains caused by acidity, dirt, ageing/oxidized varnish, or discoloration. There was a slight movement or slackening in the middle and lower portions of the Painting. Quite visible under ultraviolet light were previous retouching and over-painting. On some portions, the retouching began to resurface and change in hue. There was a visible crack that ran vertically at the center of the Painting, which had been retouched. The retouched areas became visible to a certain extent when viewed from an angle.

Finally, there was slight blooming and blanching on the upper part of the paint layer. This turbidity or cloudiness develops in varnish film, caused usually by humid weather. Application of the protective coat or varnish was uneven. Some areas of the varnish layer retained their gloss while some turned dull. Since a new equilibrium was created when the artwork was rolled down, crackling or a network of cracks, movements, deformations, and other forms of alterations possibly occurred.

## **PROPOSED TREATMENT**

1. Documentation (graphic and photographic)
2. Solubility testing and analysis
3. Mechanical cleaning
4. Relaxation
5. Application of protective coat by facing
6. Consolidation
7. De-Acidification
8. Application of strip lining /lining/patching
9. Defacing
10. Mounting
11. Chemical cleaning
12. Application of fillers
13. Preliminary in-painting
14. Application of retouching varnish
15. Final in-painting
16. Application of protective coat
17. Framing



## TREATMENT OF THE PAINTING (2007-2008)

After documentation, a solubility test was conducted to determine the appropriate solvents to be used for cleaning the Painting by chemical means. This was performed with cotton buds dipped in solvent and slightly swabbed on the different colors of the paint layer in inconspicuous areas. A negative result (i.e., no color transfer from the paint layer to the cotton swabs) indicated that the solvent was safe to be used for the artwork. Distilled water (cold and warm), petroleum distillates, alcohols, formaldehydes, ammonia, and other organic solvents were tested for solubility reactions. Solubility tests were done in quadrant sections, and results showed that most of the colors were stable, insoluble, and only partly soluble on high concentrations of mixed solvents swabbed with pressure.

Prior to any treatment, it is a requisite to examine the physical state of the Painting in terms of deformation, strength, flexibility, and alteration among others. Since the Painting was kept rolled in storage for many years, deformation and contraction/expansion of the textile support occurred, becoming stiff and inflexible with time. It was necessary to correct and revert such changes through the process of relaxation.

Relaxation was carried out by laying the Painting flat on a table, sandwiching it with blotting papers, and covering it with Plexiglas. To ensure that no unnecessary movement of painting layers occur during relaxation, pieces of sandbags with equal weights were distributed uniformly along the entire perimeter of the Painting. The Painting was subjected to this condition for weeks until such a time when it reached a new state of equilibrium with the environment, thereby making it flexible and workable again for further conservation treatment.

Since the Painting was no longer in its pristine condition due to natural and accelerated ageing, some portions of the painting layers were relatively weak. Craquelures, or networks of cracks, in no particular pattern, were very apparent in some areas. Flaking, paint losses, smudging/chalking, scratches, abrasions, and other forms of blind cleavage (i.e. cupping, tenting) were also present in an abstract arrangement. In order to arrest the extent of these alterations and accelerated aging, the Painting was consolidated.

Local consolidation was conducted by applying a solution of fish glue, a natural consolidant, with a few drops of fungicide. This was thinly brushed over the cracks and pressed down using a thermal controlled spatula and pressure. Gentle press strokes were applied following the direction of the painting technique to ensure that no loss of paint layer occurred while consolidating. To prevent exfoliation on the other layers of the Painting during consolidation, pieces of short-fibered special protective paper were adhered in contact with the cracks and consolidant. After consolidation, the protective papers and excess consolidant were removed by portions with warm distilled water to avoid possible residual deposits, and then dried to prevent blanching.

Aside from the mechanical stresses to which the Painting was subjected, which were caused by relative changes in humidity and temperature over time, its monumental size posed a great risk when mounted on the stretcher. The tensile forces and pressure applied while stretching the Painting could break or tear apart the textile support. Based on these observations and possibilities, it was decided that the original textile be totally lined with

new textile for reinforcement and additional strength. Synthetic thermoplastic film (BEVA film) was attached to the back of the original textile while the new textile (Belgian linen) was applied with synthetic thermoplastic resin, GUSTAV Berger's original formula 371, prior to lining. The original textile was adhered to the new textile with controlled heat and pressure for lining.

The Painting was stretched and mounted on a new wood stretcher with pullers until a taut condition was reached. The edges of the Painting were then tacked using coated iron nails. The stretcher, made of cedar wood, was beveled with keys and crossbars treated with wood preservative designed especially for mounting the Painting. The stretched canvas was framed using its original, intricately designed gold-leaf frame. The frame grooves were lined with non-acidic felt separator to prevent friction between the frame and stretcher.

The Painting was hung on an installation panel with angular rigid metal supports on the sides and base to hold it in place while on exhibition.

Cleaning was conducted *in situ* through mechanical and chemical methods. Mechanical cleaning involved brushing the dirt, insect excretions, and other foreign matter with soft bristled brushes. Chemical cleaning introduced the use of chemical reagents to remove ingrained surface dirt that had accumulated on the paint layer over the period of time.

An irreversible process, chemical cleaning required adequate knowledge and extra care as this method could result in excess or over-cleaning, leading to more damage to the Painting if not properly administered. Aqueous solution, a mixture of water and other solvents, was used for the chemical cleaning of the Painting's surface. Distilled water mixed with a solution of alcohol, ammonia, and/or formaldehyde of different stoichiometric proportions were prepared and used. In some portions, petroleum distillate was most appropriate. Several tests were conducted to ensure that these cleaning agents were effective and not detrimental to the artwork. Chemical cleaning reduced the surface tension and facilitated the wetting of the dirt layer with the aqueous mixture. The particles of dirt that adhered to the painting layer were loosened and removed from the surface by swabbing with cotton buds. Another important factor with respect to the cleaning agent was the pH value, which should fall within the range of 6 to 8, slightly alkaline and favoring an acceptable degree of vaporization. Chemical cleaning was performed in sections; in some areas of the Painting, several re-passes were required.

Lacunae of lost paints and ground were filled up with freshly prepared stucco and polished to the same level as the original paint layer. The areas filled with stucco were retouched by in-painting, which was carried-out in two parts. Preliminary in-painting involved watercolors and the homogenous spraying of retouching varnish to ensure a strong bonding and cohesion between the paint and ground layers. For the final in-painting, conservation pigments were used to enhance the color brilliance. For both the preliminary and final in-paintings, imitative techniques were used so that the colors would blend and integrate with the overall aesthetic and appearance of the Painting.

The varnish was the final and finishing stratum of the Painting. It was one of the most sensitive layers of painting due to its composition, large surface area, and thickness. It

responded to mechanical stresses with changes of varying magnitude, which included yellowing, discoloration, blooming, and craquelure formation. The ideal varnish for paintings should remain transparent and colorless over a long term, retain its elasticity, and be easily removable with gentle non-polar solvent.

The entirety of the Painting was varnished with gloss mineral spirit acrylic aerosol (archival varnish), sprayed uniformly to serve as protective coat from dirt, dust, and other foreign matter, and to appropriately enhance the image of the artwork.

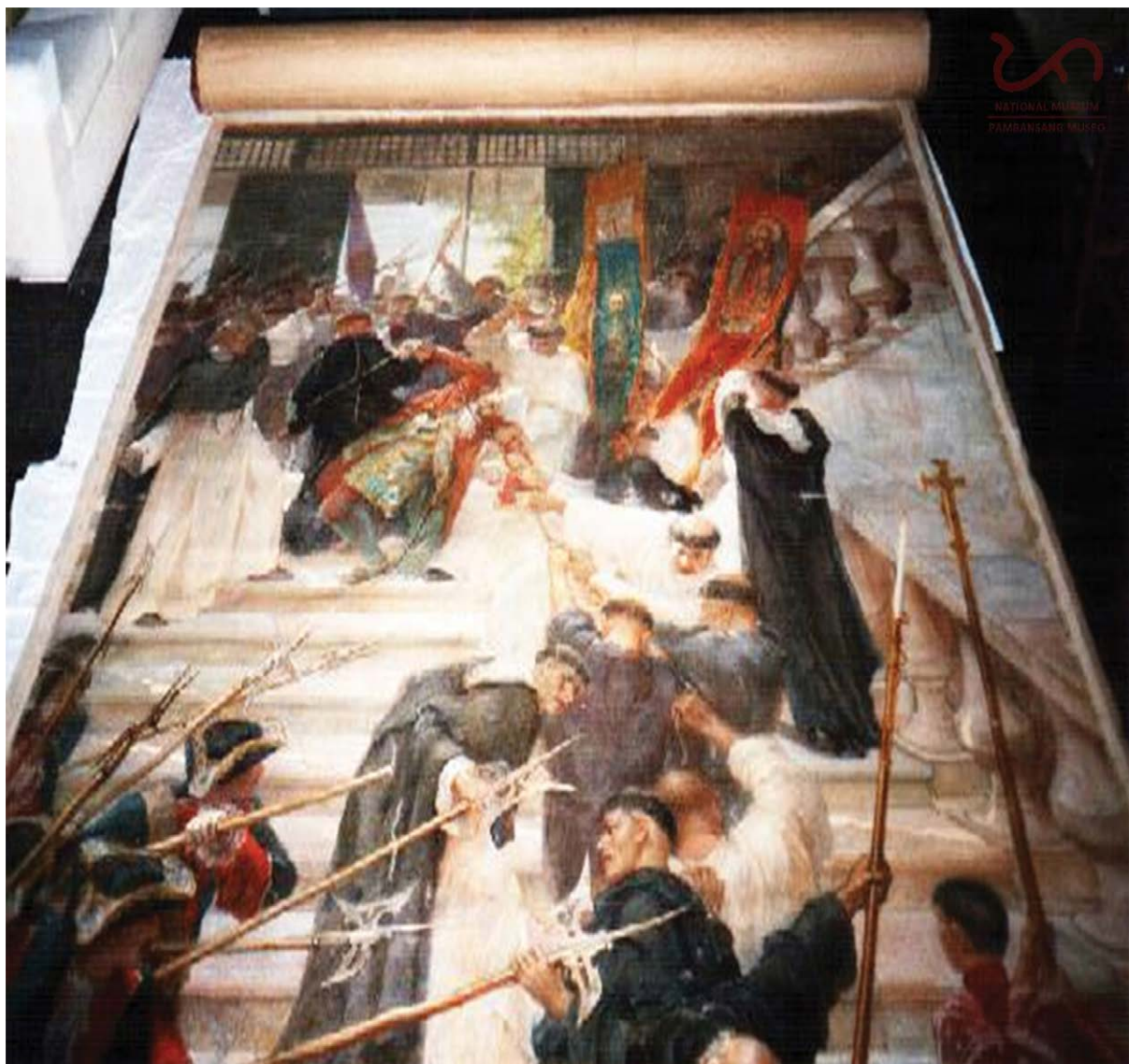


Figure 1. The Painting during assessment and physical examination at the Locsin Residence in 2007.



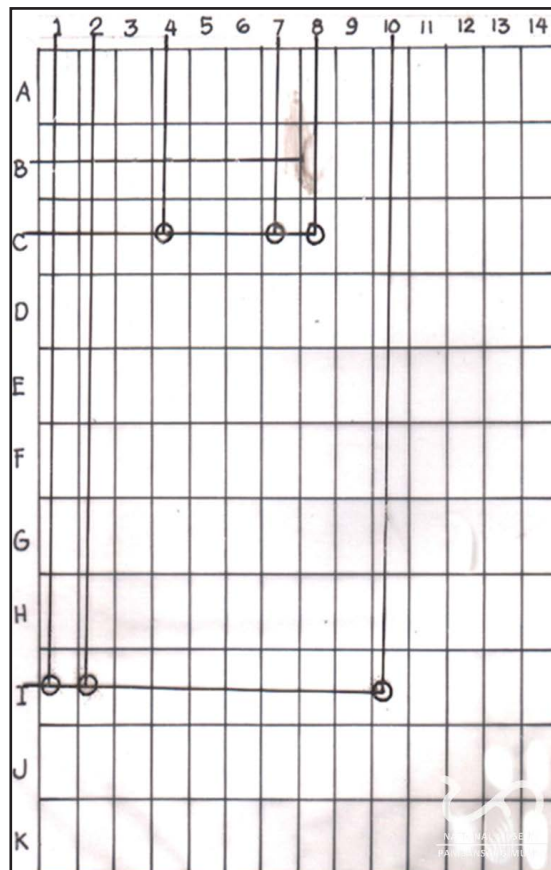


Figure 2. Location of areas were sampling for the Solubility Test was performed.

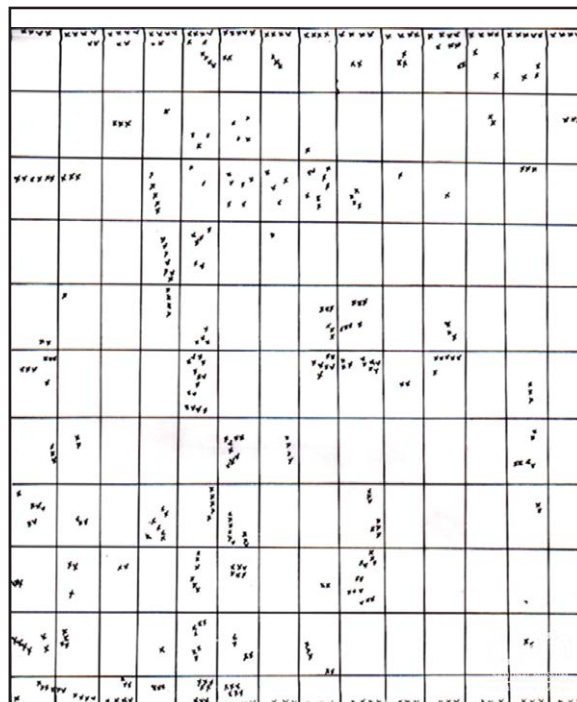


Figure 3. Graphic Documentation No. 1 (exact location of the paint loss).

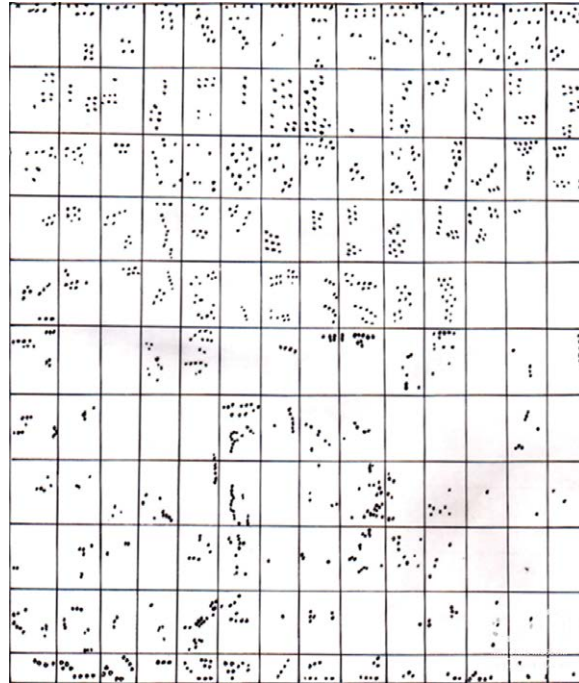


Figure 4. Graphic Documentation No. 2 (exact location of abrasions).

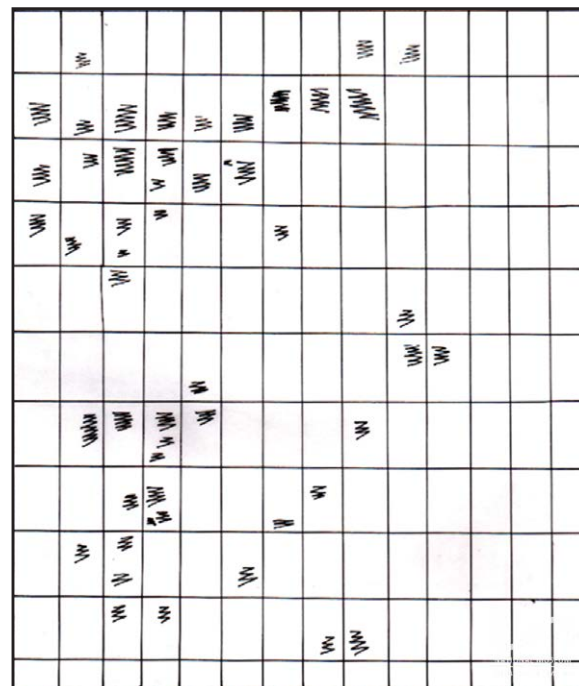


Figure 5. Graphic Documentation No. 3 (exact location of cracks).



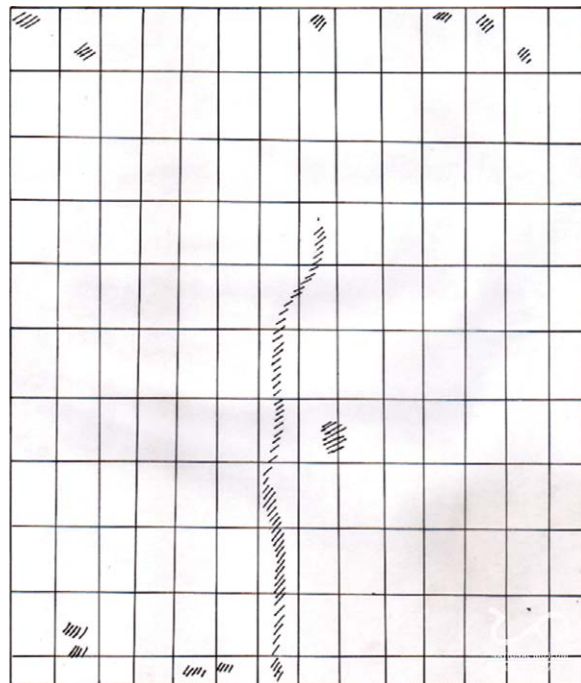


Figure 6. Graphic Documentation No. 4 (exact location of the retouched portions).

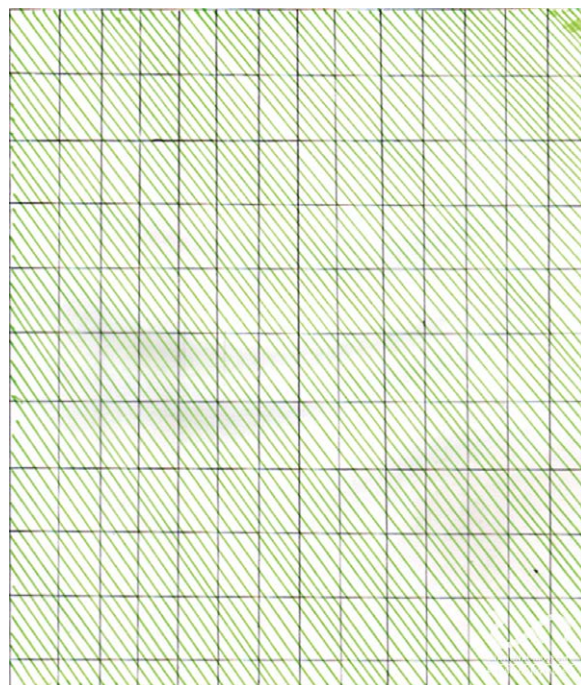


Figure 7. Graphic Documentation No. 5 (exact location of varnish layer).

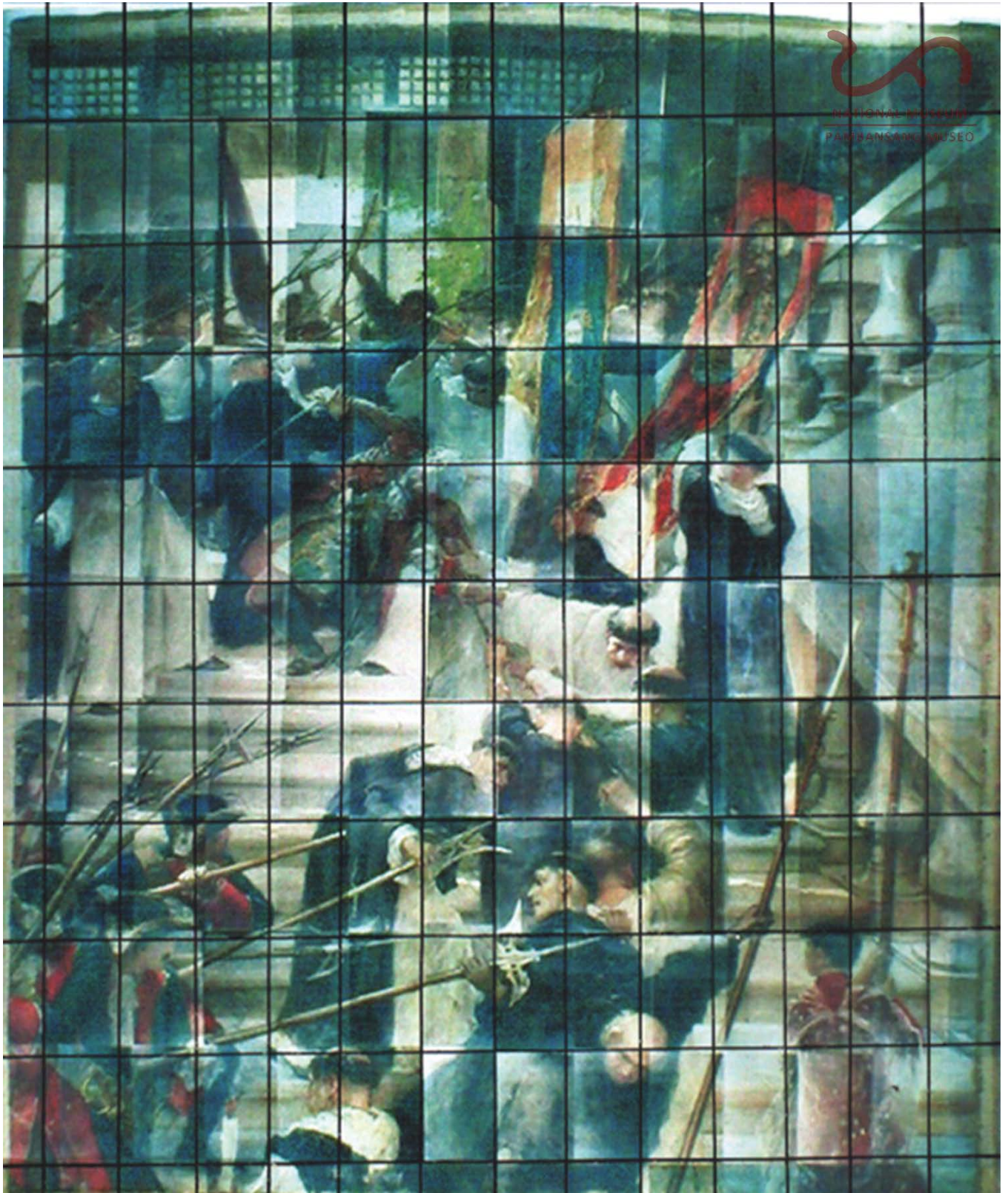


Figure 8. Photographic Documentation of the Painting.





Figure 9. Deterioration: the upper corners of the Painting are marked by loss of ground paint layers probably caused by repeated removal and installation.



Figure 10. Deterioration: loose flaking and erosion of some portions of paint layer; stain spots marred the paint film.

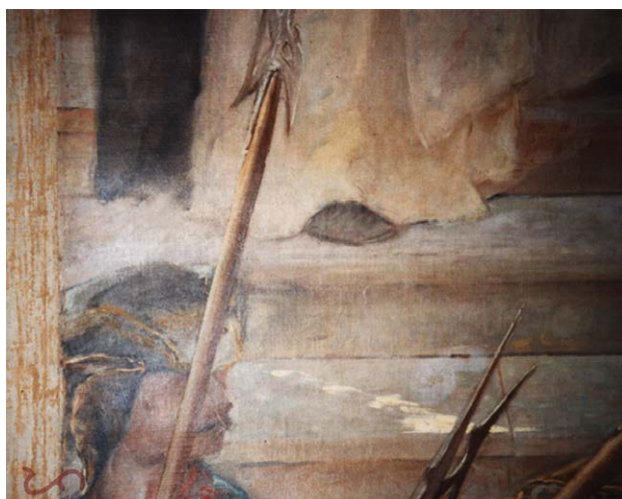


Figure 11. Deterioration: white cloudy spots indicating formation of blooming.



Figure 12. Deterioration: abrasions and brown stains with small and dispensed paint losses.

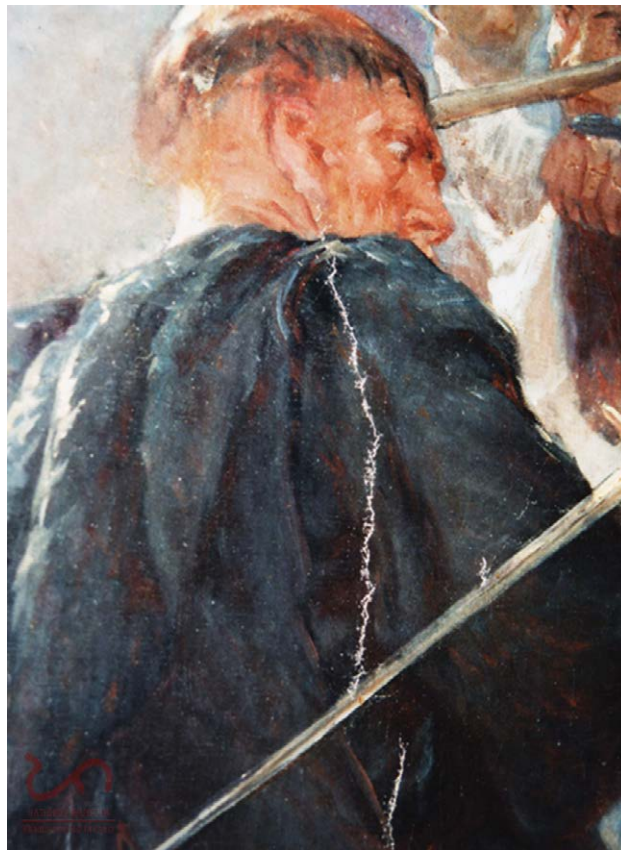


Figure 13. Deterioration: blooming and paint loss extending downwards.

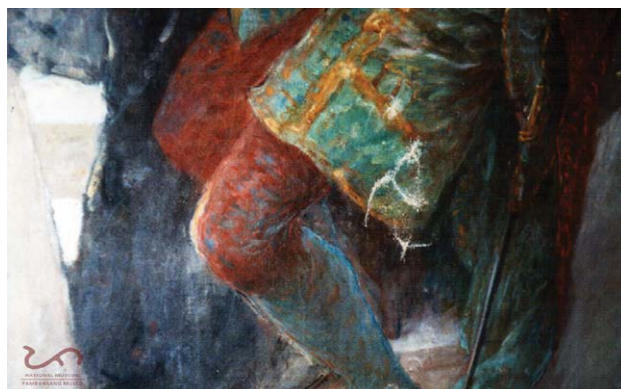


Figure 14. Deterioration: cracking and paint losses on the legs, ankle, and edge of the coat.





Figure 15. Deterioration: smudges/chalking and scratches/abrasions on the topmost area of the Painting.



Figure 16. Deterioration: cracks were most evident in the dark section and surface dirt on the lighter hues of orange and green colors.

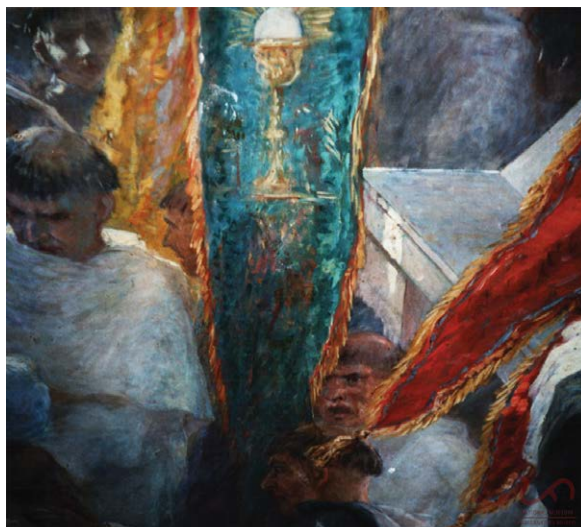


Figure 17. Deterioration: small bits of crumble paint layer on face and vest; large areas of paint losses on clothing; brown foreign matter speckled with paint film.



Figure 18. Deterioration: freckled surface dirt on base area.

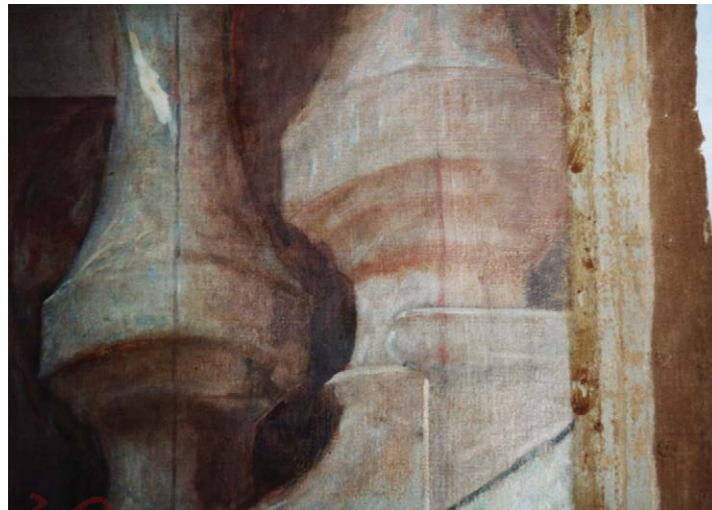


Figure 19. Deterioration: discoloration indicating previous restoration work.



Figure 20. Deterioration: marks on paint film's edge; blooming on red vest of the acolyte.





Figure 21. Treatment: application of protective paper to prevent exfoliation of other layers.



Figure 22. Treatment: consolidation of craquelures using natural consolidant with thermal spatula.



Figure 23. Treatment: defacing or removal of protective papers after consolidation.



Figure 24. Treatment: removal of excess consolidant to avoid blanching.



Figure 25. Treatment: adhesion of synthetic thermoplastic (BEVA) film to the back of the original textile of the Painting for lining.



Figure 26. Treatment: application of synthetic thermoplastic resin (BEVA Gel) to new textile support for lining.





Figure 27. Treatment: adherence of original textile to new textile support with controlled heat and pressure (lining).



Figure 28. Treatment: original textile lined with new textile support.



Figure 29. Treatment: mounting the Painting on its new stretcher.



Figure 30. Treatment: stretching the Painting.



Figure 31. Treatment: edges of textile support tacked on stretcher with coated iron nails.



Figure 32. Treatment: the Painting during installation.





Figure 33. Treatment: chemical cleaning of painting using appropriate solvents.

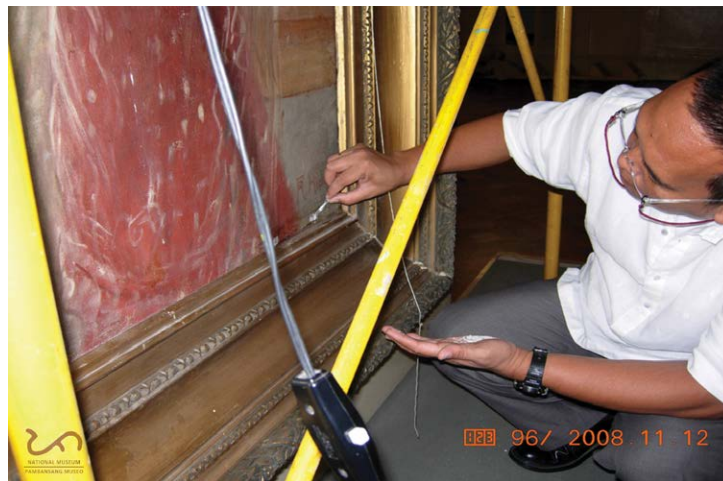


Figure 34. Treatment: application of filler on lacunae or losses using freshly prepared gesso.



Figure 35. Treatment: freshly prepared gesso carefully and precisely applied on losses with micro spatula and scalpel blades.

## **ABOUT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM**

The National Museum, a Trust of the Government, is a permanent institution in the service of the community and its development, accessible to the public, and not intended for profit. Its general mission is to obtain, keep, study, and present material evidence of man and his environment. More specifically, in its work of acquiring, documenting, preserving, exhibiting, and fostering scholarly study and public appreciation of works of art, specimens, and cultural and historical artifacts representative of or unique to the cultural heritage of the Filipino people and the natural history of the Philippines, the National Museum is charged with accomplishing three principle objectives:

- As an educational institution, to take the lead in disseminating knowledge of Filipino cultural and historical heritage and developing a corps of professionals knowledgeable about the preservation, enrichment, and dynamic evaluation of the Filipino national culture.
- As a scientific institution, to conduct basic and systematic research programs combining integrated laboratory and field work in anthropology and archaeology, geology and paleontology, botany, and zoology; and to maintain reference collections on these disciplines and promote scientific development in the Philippines.
- As a cultural center, to take the lead in the study and preservation of the nation's rich artistic and cultural heritage in the reconstruction and rebuilding of our past and the development of the national cultural wealth.

The National Museum is also mandated to establish, manage, and develop museums comprising the National Museum Complex and the National Planetarium in Manila, as well as regional museums in key locations around the country. Currently, the National Museum national network comprise nineteen regional, branch, and site museums throughout the archipelago.

The National Museum manages and develops the national reference collections in the areas of cultural heritage and natural history and carries out permanent research programs. Appreciation of the collections and research findings of the Museum, as well as technical and museological skills and knowledge, are disseminated through exhibitions, publications, educational, training, outreach, technical assistance, and other public programs.

The National Museum also implements and serves as a regulatory and enforcement agency of the Government with respect to a series of cultural laws, and is responsible for various culturally significant properties, sites, and reservations throughout the country. It is the lead agency in the official commemoration and celebration of Museums and Galleries Month, which is the month of October, annually.





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