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For Immediate Use

Through My Father's Eyes: The Filipino American Photographs of Ricardo Ocreto Alvarado Opens at the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History June 6, 2004

Filipino Americans are one of this nation's largest and fastest-growing Asian American ethnic groups, yet their history in this country is not well known. 'Through My Father's Eyes: The Filipino American Photographs of Ricardo Alvarado' — on view at the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History from June 6 through August 1, 2004 — is a rare collection of fifty-one black-and-white photographs taken by Ricardo Alvarado (1914–1976) in Northern California during the 1940s and 50s. Selected from more than 3,000 negatives, these affectionate images of ordinary people at work and at play provide an intimate view of Filipino life and history in the United States.

Alvarado immigrated to San Francisco in 1928 from the Philippines. He was part of the wave of Filipino immigrants known as the Manong ("older brother") generation, who came to the United States between 1901 and 1935, after the Spanish American War of 1898 made the islands a U.S. Territory. At first, Alvarado made a living working as a janitor and houseboy. During World War II, he served as a medical technician in the Army's highly decorated First Filipino Infantry Regiment. When he returned from the Pacific, he supported himself as a cook.

Alvarado satisfied his passion for photography by capturing on film special events and daily life of the Filipino American community in San Francisco after the war. He canvassed the Bay Area's city streets and rural back roads for subjects. His camera gave him entree into large social functions — weddings, funerals, baptisms, parties, and dances — as well as intimate family gatherings. He recorded street scenes, beauty pageants, cockfights, agricultural workers tending crops, and entrepreneurs on the job.

When he died in 1976, he left behind a rich trove of historically significant and visually arresting images, yet they remained hidden until his daughter, Janet Alvarado, found his vast collection and recognized their importance. She formed the Alvarado Project to ensure that her father's unique record of Filipino American life would be preserved and seen.

This exhibition is curated by Janet Alvarado and Franklin Odo, director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific Program. Created by the Alvarado Project, it was developed by the Smithsonian Institution Asian Pacific American Project in collaboration with the National Museum of American History, Behring Center, and circulated by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES). Additional support has been provided by FedEx and a circle of friends. The Los Angeles showing is

co-presented by the UCLA Fowler Museum, the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, and the Filipino American Library, Los Angeles. Local support is provided by the Wells Fargo Foundation, the Countrywide Foundation, and the Filipino American National Historical Society, Los Angeles.

'Through My Father's Eyes' will be on view in the Fowler Museum's Goldenberg Galleria. The Fowler is open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5 p.m.; and on Thursdays, noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA's School of the Arts and Architecture, is located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Parking is available for \$7 in Lot 4. For more information, the public may call (310) 825-4361.

Related Programs:

Sunday, June 6, 2004 noon–5 pm

Opening Day

2 pm

Lecture: A Daughter's Perspective

The photographer's daughter, Janet Alvarado, will provide background for the images in the exhibition, while Gina Inocencio, program specialist, Smithsonian Institution Asian Pacific American Program, will offer a cultural history of 1940s–50s Filipino American life. Free, no reservations required.

Saturday, June 26, 2004 1–4 pm

A World of Art Family Workshop: Parol Lanterns

Create a decorative parol, the holiday paper lantern made in the Philippines. Reservations required: 310/825-8655. Free for Fowler and Filipino American Library members; \$5 materials fee for non-members.

Sunday, July 11, 2004

2 pm

Kids in the Courtyard Series: Storytelling

Join guests from the Filipino American Library as they tell stories from the Library's collections. Free, no reservations required.

3 pm

Summer Sunset Series: Filipino American Library Pamama Rondalla

Hear rondalla — an ensemble of plucked string instruments, including the banduria, octavina, laud, and a rhythm section made up of gitara (guitar) and bass — performed by this local group, composed of children and adults. Outdoors in the Fowler's UCLA Art Council Amphitheater; free, no reservations required.

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