

### **Evolution of the Philippines artist Ronald Ventura up to international recognition**

While a solo exhibition is currently dedicated to the Philippines artist Ronald Ventura at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Taipei, we looked at the career path of this artist, increasingly popular in South-East Asia. Ronald Ventura is born in 1973, he graduated from Santo Tomas University (Major in painting) (1993). After graduation, the artist devoted time to teaching in his own university and he held his first solo exhibition only in 2000. From this first exhibition at Drawing Room in Manila, titled « All Souls Day », Ronald Ventura held a solo exhibition at least once or twice a year. Over time, his work has been evolving and the artist used the potentials of hyperrealism and figuration, pop and pastiche, through paintings, sculptures and mixed media. Ronald Ventura explains that « a shift in his artistic style occurs : producing more of the marble-skinned, luminous nudes. Inspired by classical imagery, his figurative paintings combined pale bodies, bestial symbolism and sepia ».

From 2000 to 2011, his work has been more and more validated and brought him to travel abroad. In residency in Australia, he received the Ateneo Art Awards, Studio Residency Grant, for his serie « The Human study », graphite on canvas work, in 2005. He held his first solo exhibition in the United States in 2009 with « Metaphysic of Skin ». These travel opportunities also gave him the chance to compare Old Masters and Modern art in museum collections, an influence which is obvious and mastered in his work. In 2011, Ronald Ventura sold a painting titled « Grayhound » - graphite and oil on canvas, figuring a superimposed image of horses and human legs, at a record price of \$ 1.1 million in Sotheby's HK. « When we start working with Ronald Ventura in 2007, his works were sold \$ 3.000 to \$ 6.000 », reported Primo Marella Gallery in Milano. In 2016, some of his works exceed \$ 1 million.

Currently Ventura's style is back to the hyperrealist figuration of his earlier years while combined with a pastiche of images of popular culture - cartoons, graffiti and graphic art -. These last years he has been working on « possibilities to make images across different media, combining more and more complex images and layers of iconography within his works ». Ronald Ventura adapted his times, explains Lisa Ito from Art+ Magazine and tries to attract the viewer's eye to and draw him into his own world. The artist holds a solo exhibition in MOCA, Taipei from September 15 to November 20: "Project: Finding Home - Ronald Ventura Sole Exhibition".