





## UNCANNY <sub>离奇魅影</sub>

Last year **Ronald Ventura** shot into the international spotlight when his painting **Grayground** broke records at Sotheby's Hong Kong auction, but it's business as usual at his Manila studio where the artist uses a playful layering of images to craft his paintings, sculptures and prints.

2011年, 菲律宾艺术家**罗纳德·文图拉**的作品《灰地》在中国香港苏富比创下东南亚现当代艺术品拍卖的最高纪录, 他本人也声名鹊起。他的绘画、雕塑和版画作品都以图像的叠加为主要特色, 成名之后他在马尼拉工作室的业务也一如往常。

Words 撰文: Dionne Bel

ast year Ronald Ventura's graphite, acrylic and oil on canvas painting *Grayground* broke the world auction record for a contemporary Southeast Asian painting when it sold for HK\$8.4 million (US\$1.08 million) at Sotheby's Hong Kong Spring Sale. The sale made waves in the region's contemporary art scene, but Ventura says he's kept his focus on creative production. "I have always believed that the creative process is totally different from what happens in the art market," he says, but adds that he is happy the sale helped to raise the profile of Filipino art and artists.

Born in 1973 in Manila, where he still lives and works, Ventura has become known for complex compositions that he builds through a rich layering of images inspired by pop iconography, exhibiting regionally and, increasingly, internationally following his solo debut at Tyler Rollins Fine Art in New York.

In his work he borrows as freely from traditions of hyperrealism and surrealism as from cartoons and graffiti, incorporating recurring motifs such as skeletons, cartoons and mushroom clouds and constructing a narrative from the juxtaposing of high and low, old and new, where Disney characters rub shoulders with skulls and human subjects take on animal attributes.

"Working and living in a visually-saturated world has influenced me profoundly," he says. "My son and I enjoy watching animation as it presents a broad spectrum of the human imagination. Often ideas from such sources inspire my art."

The layering of images and iconographies also echoes the cultural hybridity of the Philippines. "Living and working in the Philippines, one is continuously engaging with its multifaceted society and history influenced 年,罗纳德·文图拉以油,石墨和丙烯颜料在帆布上绘制的《灰地》在中国香港苏富比春季拍卖中以840万港市(折合108万美元)的价格售出,创下东南亚现当代艺术品拍卖的最高纪录。这一消息在亚太地区艺术界引发了不小的轰动,但是他说自己一心扑在创作上。"我向来觉得创作过程和市场反响风马牛不相及",不过他认为有了这样的先例,菲律宾艺术和艺术家在国际艺术界的地位有望水涨船高。

罗纳德·文图拉1973年出生于马尼拉,多年来一直在此生活和工作。他的作品以多层图像叠加为主要特色,灵感源自流行图像。在纽约的泰勒·罗林斯画廊举办过个展之后,他参与的本地和国际展览也越来越多。他不仅借鉴了高度写实主义和超现实主义的传统,也从漫画和街头涂鸦得到不少启示。人体骨骼、漫画



Left: Ronald Ventura 左: 罗纳德·文图

Right: Lithograph on aluminium sheet, photo 右: 铝箔印刷, 照片





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身为艺术家,很难忽视周边的一切。我想通过自己的作品应对这些问题,但是我也会注重作品的趣味和幽默感。





Top: Grayground, 2011, graphite, acrylic and oil on canvas, photo  $\ensuremath{\text{@}}$  Sotheby's Hong Kong

上:《灰地》, 2011年, 石墨、丙烯酸布面油画, 香港苏富比提供图片

Bottom: Lithograph, screen print, aluminium sheets, rubber sheet, spray paint on wooden panel 下: 铝箔印刷, 丝网印刷, 铝箔、橡胶、喷塑于木板 by Spanish, Japanese, American and indigenous cultures. My work explores these phenomena through layers of imagery that evoke East and West, modern and historical associations, while addressing these cultural signifiers in contemporary society," he notes.

Ventura hopes to draw the viewer's attention to what he calls the "second skin" of cultural signifiers that each person carries with him, however unwittingly. He views this skin as an expressive surface – written on with tattoos, concealed under layers of imagery, or exploding outwards to reveal an inner world of fantasy and conflict.

In doing so, however, Ventura's work also addresses wider global issues: the role of religion, commodification, consumerism, pollution and warfare. Though imbued with a signature sense of playfulness, the dark undertones of his pieces often evoke a sense of discomfort in the viewer. "As an artist, I find it hard to ignore what is happening around me and I am trying to address some of these issues through my work," Ventura says, "but I always inject my sense of fun and humour."

Earlier this year, Ventura completed a four-week residency at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI), where he worked with a 12-member team on his new solo exhibition. The over 40 new works examine our relationship with, and destruction of, the environment and include nuclear cloud sculptures cast from paper, a tree of life series that features paper trees made from a frottage of ornate furniture frames, skulls made from reclaimed materials and hazard sign lithographs on aluminium sheets.

Before turning his attention to painting and sculpture around 2001, Ventura worked almost exclusively in printmaking, and he says he is relishing his return to working with paper. "I have always enjoyed printmaking and wanted to continue with it. Prints are more time-consuming, labour-intensive and involve more steps than painting, but I enjoy the various processes. I'm very happy to have this opportunity to translate my concepts into unconventional forms and materials."

Ronald Ventura's exhibition of new works runs November 17 to December 15 at STPI. Tel: +65 6336 3663, www.stpi.com.sg

和蘑菇云等图案在他的作品中反复出现,各色人等、新事物和旧事物形成了鲜明的对比。在这些作品中,迪士尼人物和骷髅头合为一体,人身上具有动物的特征。

他说:"在影像饱和的时代生活和工作,不受影响是不可能的。儿子和我都很喜欢看动画片,因为动画片展示了人类的想象力,也赋予我创作灵感。"

层层叠叠的图像也从一个角度展示了菲律宾多样的文化。罗纳德·文图拉说:"菲律宾的社会和历史具有多面性,在这里生活和工作,会受到西班牙、日本、美国和本土文化的熏陶。我的作品以图像叠加为手段,引发了东方与西方,现代与古代的联想,探索了相关文化现象,揭示了现代社会的文化符号。"

罗纳德·文图拉认为文化符号像第二层皮肤般形影不离, 但是很少有人留意到, 他想通过自己的作品令观众注意到这一点。他认为皮肤具有很强的表现力, 可以在上面刺青, 可以隐藏在层层图案后面, 还可以展示内在世界的幻想与冲空

除了揭示文化符号,他的作品还涉及更加宏大的主题:宗教的作用、商业化、消费主义、污染和战争。虽然他的作品以标志的趣味性著称,但是其中蕴含的黑暗内涵令部分观众反感。他说:"身为艺术家,很难忽视周边的一切。我想通过自己的作品应对这些问题,但是我也会注重作品的趣味和幽默感。"

今年早期, 罗纳德·文图拉在新加坡泰勒版画研究院驻院四个星期, 与12个组员一起为新的个展做准备。个展由逾四十幅作品组成, 主要探讨了人与自然的关系和对自然的破坏, 包括纸做的放射云雕塑、由装饰性家具框制成的纸树, 用回收材料制成的骷髅头和铝片上的危险标志。

2001年以前, 罗纳德·文图拉的注意力并不在绘画和雕塑方面, 那时候他专注于版画。他说很享受绘制版画的乐趣, "我很喜欢版画制作, 想一直画下去。版画很费时间和精力, 创作过程比普通绘画复杂得多, 但是可以自得其乐。有这样一个机会将我的理念转变为非传统的形式和材料, 我很开心。"

罗纳德·文图拉的新作将于11月17日至12月15日在新加坡泰勒版画研究院 (STPI) 展览。电话: +65 6336 3663, 网址: www.stpi.com.sg



Top: Battle Field, 2010, graphite, acrylic and oil on canvas 上:《战场》, 2010, 石墨、丙烯酸布面油画

Bottom: Invitation to the Feast 2011, oil on canvas © Tyler Rollins Fine Art 下:《盛宴邀请函》, 2011, 布面油画, Tyler Rollins Fine Art提供

