



turn the tables

ronaldo ruiz

On the cover
Adjustable
48"x60" in | 121.92 x 152.4 cm
Oil on canvas
2008

Ronaldo Ruiz
Turn the Tables
(New paintings)

March 19 – April 7, 2009

Artesan Gallery + Studio
793 Bukit Timah Road #02-01 (row of shop houses just before Sixth Avenue)
Singapore 269765
Tel. +65 6469 7818 | +65 9068 58562
E-mail: roberta@theartesan.com | network@theartesan.com
www.theartesan.com

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Turn The Table
36" x 48" in | 91.44 x 121.92 cm
Oil on canvas
2009

foreword



Sharing the Last Breath

When Ronaldo Ruiz and I first connected via an e-introduction, he had attached to the e-mail, an image of his painting “Sharing the Last Breath”, an oil on canvas depicting three figures lying down, their faces strapped in oxygen masks with its hoses connected to water in glass fish bowls. Each human figure held a glass bowl with a goldfish swimming in it; both human and fish were sharing the only source of oxygen. The concept was stark and incredible, and the technique showed a disciplined master’s hand at work.

We finally met in November 2008 in Singapore when Ronaldo participated in “Future of Imagination 5”, an international performance art event, held at the Sculpture Square on Waterloo Street. We then planned for his residency in 2009 at the studio, as well as a preview exhibition to give art

enthusiasts a ‘sneak peak’ of the type of work he does. In fact, the exhibition Turn the Tables serves as a preamble to a major solo exhibition planned in 2010 with Artesan. Aside from being a prelude, we see a different Ronaldo who, literally, ‘turns the tables’ on himself. He ventures back to the exacting art of figurative painting, revisiting a style that stayed in limbo for some time.

“Turn The Tables” cleverly bridges three art forms, highlighting the multiplicity of Ronaldo’s role as an artist. True to form, he incorporates painting, video installation and performance art in this preview exhibition. His new series of paintings illustrate his unique position in art being both a performance artist and a painter. Not bound by one discipline, he negotiates through the fields of specialties with ease and quickly clarifies that one discipline is not left at the backburner while he concentrates on another. This time, all his artistic undertakings showcase various art forms, linking different ideas into a coherent yet powerfully creative concept.

By showcasing artists who resist mediocrity and continuously pushing the boundaries of art from technique to subject matter, Artesan hopes to always draw you into its interesting world of diverse expressions. We hope the audience will share the spontaneous energy that went into creating this exhibit, as well as witness a fabulous medium that continues to exhilarate and inspire our own imaginations.

ROBERTA DANS
DIRECTOR
ARTESAN GALLERY + STUDIO

turn the tables: introduction

by Kaye O'Yek

The new series of artworks by Ronaldo Ruiz in Turn the Tables shows the human body in strained and contorted positions yet perfectly balanced on a table, which makes his spectators stop and mull over whether they are seeing a glimpse of reality or art masquerading as fantasy. Consider this: why would a table, its existence usually taken for granted in private and public spaces, be a central object for a piece of art, together with an individual whose seemingly undecipherable will is either to meld with or struggle against it?

It is indeed a disquieting body that is depicted in Ruiz's latest paintings, which are based on a series of performative actions by Seiji Shimoda, a Japanese artist, poet, painter, organizer and founder of one of Asia's pioneering action art events, the Nippon International Performance Art Festival. It is Shimoda's seminal work "On the Table" - presented since the 1990s more than 150 times in over 100 countries - that inspired Ruiz's latest exhibition. *On the Table* is a poignant performance that has its own place in art action history. Using a simple table and his own body, Shimoda tells the story of mind versus matter. In the numerous times that he has presented this performance, a naked Shimoda executes restrained reverse somersaults on a table, propelling his muscles under and over its flat surface, his feet never touching the ground. Through



Adaptable
48" x 60" in | 121.92 x 152.4 cm
Oil on canvas
2008

sheer will, discipline and muscular power, Shimoda braces his body against the furniture while inching his way gradually with strong yet meditative movements, creating graceful forms with his body. His breathing punctuates the performance - slow and calming one moment and loud and jagged the next, building up to measured cadences on another. The audience to this live art action is always held captive and spellbound; each movement of the artist's body witnessed in contemplative awe.



Changing our perception of the four-legged flat base surface where we eat, work or do other innumerable mundane activities on, Ruiz also gives a new insight to this overlooked fixture. Establishing the table as a cultural object that invokes the gathering of diverse individuals, concepts and contexts, he brings to the fore the unspoken beauty of something rigid, inert and man-made referenced against people's flexible, ever-moving and organic bodies.

Ronaldo Ruiz is a performance artist himself. For him, performance art goes side by side with painting, or the visual arts, each providing different stimuli that further his artistic development. Long since his first victories in local painting competitions to his current involvement in the Philippine art scene, performance art has always had a presence in his career. It exposed him to various festivals all over the world, giving him opportunities to touch base with others with fervent desires to stretch the limitations of aesthetics through performance. It is through this kindred experience that he bestows honor on one of Japan's most active, famous and respected performance artist.

As a visual artist, Ruiz renders the struggle of the human spirit through the fleeting movements of performance on canvas. By treating each portrayal of Shimoda's art action with reverence and imbuing it with life through his brush strokes, Ruiz captures the essence of Shimoda's remarkable performance. The tension in the body, the effort required to propel it forward and the exertion required from the human spirit are depicted in realistic details ranging from the strained muscles, furrowed brows and sinewy contours of the body to the taut veins bulging through his smooth skin. He turns the tables on art action and transfers the energy of live performance on to his paintings but with a little twist.

On the left
Table-bodied
48" x 48" in | 121.92 x 121.92 cm
Oil on canvas
2009

This gesture of paying homage to a fellow artist is Ruiz's own way of turning the tables on himself. Through the paintings of Shimoda, he re-channels his energy back to figurative painting, an area that remained on hold, as his creative energies were focused on visual performance and abstract painting. He pushes himself out of his comfort zone and, true to form, sets about it with determined discipline thus resulting in Turn the Tables, his first solo exhibition in Singapore.

Signifying the triumph of spirit and the beauty of struggle on canvas, the artist beseeches his audience to turn the tables on their limitations, to remain flexible in the midst of crisis and live each day as a performance. Ruiz does concede that although each day is short-lived and that bodies move against time and space, he subtly urges people to channel their energies with disciplined determination to achieve their goals.

FEBRUARY 2009
MANILA, PHILIPPINES

Under the Table
48" x 72" in | 121.92 x 182.88 cm
Oil on canvas
2009





Attachtable
36" x 48" in | 91.44 x
121.92 cm
Oil on canvas
2009

On the Table
Video installation
Medium: 5 min. loop, color,
sound, projector, table
Dimension: Variable
2009





Table X
36" x 48" in | 116.84 x 121.92 cm
Oil on canvas
2008

ronaldo ruiz

Born 22 May 1971 Metro Manila, Philippines
Art Studies University of the East College of Fine Arts

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2009 **Turn the Tables**, Artesan Gallery + Studio, Singapore
2008 **Invasion**, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City
Digital Intervention, Makati City
2007 **Econversation**, Quezon City
Bring Me* (Memorabilia), International Exchange, Nagano Japan
2006 **Technological Sublimation**, Makati City
2005 **Refreshed**, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City
2004 **Wired**, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City
Virtual World, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City
Game Over, Glorietta 4, Makati City
2003 **Code Red**, Parañaque City
2002 **Hi Risk**, Makati City
Love/Lust, Quezon City
2001 **eK-se ku 'shu**, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City
Desaparecidos, The British Council, Pasig City
2000 **Naapges**, Quezon City
1999 **Kinahon**, Ayala Museum, Makati City
1998 **Babae**: Dalawang Mukha, Quezon City

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS AND PERFORMANCES

- 2009 **Philippine Art Awards Juror's Choices**, BenCab Museum, Tuba, Benguet
ASEAN Contemporary Art Exchange, Yangon, Myanmar
12' x 9', SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City
2008 **Future of Imagination 5**, Sculpture Square, Singapore
Inward Gazes - Performance Art in Asia, Macau Art Museum, Macau
Mga Likha Ni Juan dela Cruz, Movenpick Hotel, Kingdom of Bahrain
Tupada Action and Media Art (TAMA'08) International Action Art Event,
Tondaligan Beach, Dagupan City
Continuum, Spektrum Art Exhibition, Kingdom of Bahrain
Quarenta, Main Gallery Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila
2007 **The 3rd China-Japan Performance Art Exchange Project**. Beijing,
Chengdu and Xi'an China
Nippon International Communication Art Festival (NICoAF'07),
Proto Theater, Nipaf House & International Exchange, Tokyo and Nagano, Japan
Reborn Salute to 1980's (TIPAF'07), Taipei, Taiwan
The Drawing Room, Dubai & Singapore
Social Contact: Tupada Action and Media Art (TAMA'07),
Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila
15th International Performance Art Conference and undisclosed Territory,
Bali and Solo, Indonesia



Location: Ronaldo Ruiz's studio at Quezon City, Philippines
Year: 2009

Photo by: Michael Quiocho

- 2006 **Tupada XINGapore**, Wunderspace and Warung M Nasir, Singapore
Nagano International Video Art Festival (NIVAF), Japan
The Drawing Room, Singapore and Thailand
Korea-Philippines Fine Art Festival, GSIS Museo ng Sining, Manila
TAMA'06, Tupada 3rd International Action and Media Arts Event,
Lingayen Beachfront, Pangasinan
2005 **Group Show**, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City
Anniversary Show, Makati City
Third Eye, Ugnayan, 4th Philippine International Performance Art Festival,
Ateneo Art Gallery, Quezon City
Tupada 2nd International Action Art Event, Makati City
2004 **Taiwan Asia Performance Art Meeting (TAPAM)**, Kaohsiung, Taidung,
Tachung, Tainan and Taipei Taiwan
Recontre Internationale D' Art Performance De Quebec,
Montreal and Quebec, Canada
Group Show, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City
Sovereign Asian Art Exhibition, Central Hong Kong
2003 **CCP 13 Artist Award**, Main Gallery Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila
5th International Multimedial Art Festival (IMAF), Serbia & Montenegro Yugoslavia
8th Nippon International Performance Art Festival (NIPAF), Tokyo, Nagoya,
Osaka and Nagano Japan
1st Bagasbas International Eco-Art Festival, Daet Camarines Norte
2002 **4th International Multimedial Art Festival (IMAF)**, MAS Gallery &
Multimedial Art Studio, Odzaci, Yugoslavia
Nagano International / Art FUKU MASU Projects, Nagano, Japan
6th Nippon International Performance Art Festival (NIPAF), Kyoto, Tokyo,
Nagano and Nagoya, Japan
Posporo, Green Papaya Art and Ayala Museum, Philippines
2000 **Philip Morris Asian Art Award**, Singapore Art Museum
Philip Morris Philippine Art Awards, Metropolitan Museum, Manila
Asiatopia, Bangkok, Thailand
1999 **Australian Perspecta '99 Living here now – Art and Politics**,
Artspace, Sydney, Australia
The Cricket Hymn to the Shining Moon, Australian Center, Makati City

AWARDS and CITATIONS

- Metrobank Foundation Awardee** Metrobank Plaza, Philippines, 2009
Distinguished Alumnus University of the East, Philippines, 2007
Achievement Award University of the East, Philippines, 2006
Honorable Mention Art Association of the Philippines,
GSIS Museo ng Sining, 2005
30 Top Finalists 1st Sovereign Asian Art Competition, Hong Kong, 2004
CCP's Thirteen Artists Cultural Centre of the Philippines, 2003
Juror's Choice Philip Morris Philippines Art Awards Philippines,
2000 & 1997
Competition GSIS Museo ng Sining, Manila, 1997 & 1996
Artist-in-Residence Artesan Gallery + Studio, Singapore, 2009
Artspace, Sydney, Australia, 1999

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Tractable

60" x 48" in | 152.4 cm x 121.92 cm

Oil on canvas

2009

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Art Gallery + Studio
