



Ronald Ventura, *Pop!*, 2009, Oil on canvas, 96 x 72 in. (244 x 183 cm), Courtesy Tyler Rollins Fine Art. +1 212 229 9100

RONALD VENTURA

Philippines, 1973–

At present, Ronald Ventura could be considered the most successful living Filipino artist, as his painting, *Greyground*, is now a world record holder. In Sotheby's Spring 2011 sale of Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Paintings in Hong Kong, the large-scale work sold for \$1.1 million (to an anonymous bidder), twenty-four times its high estimate, to become the most expensive contemporary Southeast Asian painting to be sold at auction. The under-forty year old artist, who lives and works in Manila, has been enjoying a growing reputation for his pop-culture infused paintings and sculptures. His work layers hyper-realist images with symbols borrowed from pop and youth sub-cultures, such as cartoons, comics, graffiti and tattoos. So, with a nod to art historical technique and imagery, Ventura expresses the hybrid identity of his mass media-informed generation, whose national character is a complex mix of Eastern and Western influences. The artist's impressively quick ascension to number #104 on the Top 300 List is notable for someone who primarily has exhibited in his own country. After graduating in 1993 with a BFA from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, he was included in a number of group exhibitions, mostly in the Philippines, but also a few in Singapore, China and Japan. In the last decade, his solo shows at galleries and art centers throughout the Philippines number only around two dozen, including several at The Drawing Room in Makati City. In 2008, his first solo museum exhibit was mounted in the Museum of the National University of Singapore, and a second followed in 2009 at the Akili Museum of Art, Jakarta, Indonesia. In that same year, Ventura had his first solo show in the United States, at Tyler Rollins Fine Art in New York, which represents the artist and will offer a second solo exhibition in the fall. –KWT