

RONALD VENTURA

TYLER ROLLINS FINE ART - NEW YORK

Despite an ever-increasing interest in South Asian markets, few among the Western art cognoscenti could name more than a handful of artists from the region. Since Ronald Ventura's *Grayground* (2011) broke records at Sotheby's Contemporary Southeast Asian Painting sale in Hong Kong, however, he has likely secured a place for himself within that limited set. In "A Thousand Islands," Ventura's first one-person exhibition following the unprecedented sale of *Grayground* and second solo show at New York's Tyler Rollins Fine Art, the Filipino artist presents monochromatic paintings with sparse dashes of color along with fiberglass resin sculptures of dystopic floating islands. Just as the show's title refers to the geography of Ventura's native Philippines, the works and their aesthetics are linked to the idiosyncratic history of the island nation. Ventura often combines symbols of imperialism, be it cultural or military, to speak about the successive colonial occupiers of the country — Spain, the United States and Japan — as well as recent clashes with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the southern Philippines.

One example is *Explorer* (2011), a painting with the gun of a tank emerging from the center of what appears to be more a lump than an island. Mounted backwards on a white horse above is an explorer in modern clothes who holds an oversized telescope from which a flatly painted rainbow shoots out. On closer inspection the bedrock surrounding the tank reveals itself to be detritus that discernibly includes Disney's Goofy, a rocking horse and a skeleton seemingly lifted from a medieval etching. Fortunately the paintings in "A Thousand Islands" are punctuated by the less explicit sculptures on the walls and floors. *Pyramids* (2011), comprised of four small sculptures that range in appearance from triangular to glob-like, relies on its own form rather than on the easily read mishmash of imagery. "A Thousand Islands" is a distinct break from the hybrid figurative surrealism or almost-Chicano style that defined many of Ventura's earlier works; but while his most recent efforts are more pared down, they lack the direction pointed social commentary requires.

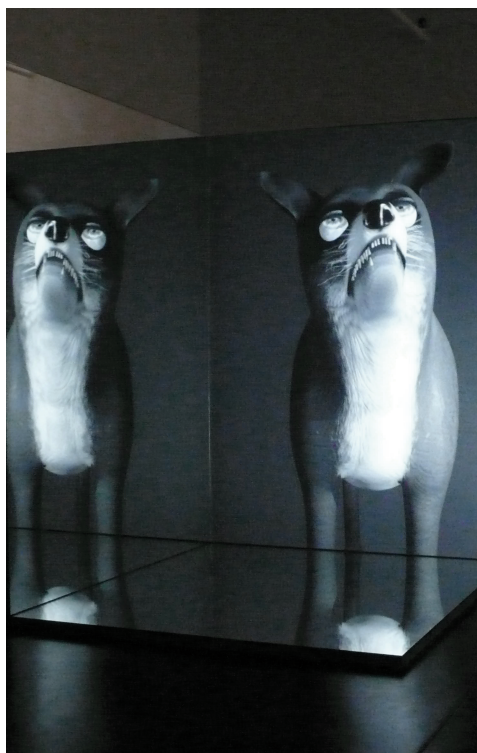
Alexander Ferrando



RONALD VENTURA, *Explorer*, 2011. Oil on canvas, 122 x 91 cm. Courtesy Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York.

ANN LISLEGAARD

MURRAY GUY - NEW YORK



The two rooms in Ann Lislegaard's most recent exhibition at Murray Guy reveal an exciting tension between two opposing, contradictory yet somehow complementary modes of working. These rooms, to the right and left of the entrance, deeply influence the affect of the exhibition. The room to the right hosts a fox-like creature that is projected onto a chain of mirrors that acts more as an architectural disruption rather than a structural support for the narrative. The visual effect of two creatures relaying this fragmented account is merely interesting; the architectural intervention seems like an afterthought that works in addition to, not with, the narrative.

The room to the left is a more sophisticated manifestation of the idea of architectural disruption; the sound from the few speakers on the floor — derived from science-fiction films such as Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville* (1965) and François Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451* (1966) — triggers an ominous suspension of disbelief marked by the eerie, the subtle and the self-reflective. The added leaning wall partially obstructs a neon sign reading "science fiction." The

floor creaks; the disassociation between the muted experience of this room and the very gallery space in which the installation resides is the exhibition's tour de force.

The two methods employed by the artist in these diametric installations enable the viewer to reflect on the brunt of narration. Disrupting a narrative, a most postmodern tool, might already be too recognizable. Lislegaard offers a different alternative within the very exhibition that uses lingual disruptions: absence. The lack of narrative anchors, visual and lingual, proves to be an effective means of confronting viewers with their own references and anchors. Self-confrontation proves a catalyzing method, framed by the elegant tongue-in-cheek of the ever-familiar neon sign.

Merve Unsal

ANN LISLEGAARD, *TimeMachine*, 2011. Mirrored box with HD video projection, sound, 11 minutes, 125 x 94 x 94 cm. Courtesy Murray Guy, New York.