

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is delighted to showcase a selection of artworks by Manuel Ocampo. Born in 1965 in the Philippines, this major artist of the Asia-Pacific region is one of the most influential on the international contemporary art scene today. He will represent the Philippines at the 57th Venice Biennale.

Manuel Ocampo's painting intertwines a wide range of signs and codes drawn from his very acute sense of observation. By combining references to colonial iconography, Judeo-Christian tradition, folk art, Spanish Catholicism, Manila's underground culture, cartoon, comics, graffiti art, naïve art, Mexican ex-voto, science fiction and neo-Dadaism, the artist generates subversive and decadent images that revisit the history of art in an explicit and provocative way.

Since the 1980s, the Filipino artist has been developing a singular plastic vocabulary characterized by an insolent and refreshing tone. With hints of cynicism and burlesque, his motifs are all together biting, disturbing and crude: rats, insects, birds, bones, skulls, human teeth, eyes, chopped off heads, phallic shapes, fetuses, feces, cemeteries, religious figures, crosses, crucifixes, tools, syringes, scribbling, flames, and cartoon characters get tangled in one single composition. Because of the profusion of signs and colors, his oil paintings express something of an underlying rudeness, which recalls the provocative work of Paul McCarthy (b. 1945) as well as the intensity of Francis Bacon (1909-1992).

Manuel Ocampo's extreme art is that of a fertile image-maker who likes to throw things in the face of the world. Thanks to his sharp and generous style, his works collide and fragment. They release an anarchic energy, break down taboos and challenge our good conscience. Satire is everywhere in his practice and all symbols of power, whether political or religious, are ironically distorted, reverted, or subjected to parody.

Through his disobedient, bold and exhilarating attitude as well as odd universe, Manuel Ocampo advocates chaos and questions our shaking, confused and unsteady world. His implacable lucidity grabs us while challenging our attachment to ideological, political and human values. The artist confronts us with complex and lively compositions sometimes reminiscent of surrealism, and invites us into both a dark and unsettling contemplation. Through the means of iconoclastic conceptualism, he explores the possibilities of an apolitical art deprived of all religious connotations.

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Manuel Ocampo is born in Quezon City (Philippines) in 1965. He currently lives and works in

## Manila (Philippines)

After graduating from the University of the Philippines, Manuel Ocampo moved to Los Angeles where he studied at the California State University of Bakersfield and graduated in 1985. He lived nearly ten years in California, where he had his first solo show in 1988, which paved the way to a successful international career. Two major events of the European contemporary art scene contributed to establish his notoriety: the Documenta IX of Cassel in 1992 (conceived by Jan Hoet) and the Venice Biennale in 1993.

Manuel Ocampo will represent the Philippines at the 57th Venice Biennale (Italy) with *The Spectre of Comparison*, an exhibition curated by Joselina Cruz. His historic paintings from the 1990's will enter in dialogue with more recent pieces. The artist will represent the Philippines for the second time at the biennale.

Manuel Ocampo's work has been showcased in many solo exhibitions throughout the world, such as *Goya vu par Ocampo: La Junte des Philippines 1815- 2015* at the Musée Goya of Castres (France, 2015), during the 7th Asia Pacific Triennial Exhibition held at the Queensland Art Gallery of Brisbane (Australia, 2013), *20 Years of Intestinal Mishaps* at the Carré St. Anne in Montpellier (France, 2013), *The Corrections* at Copenhagen Space of Drawing (Denmark, 2013), *The 80's* at the Topaz Arts of New York (USA, 2012), *The Ghost Poo of Painting* at Philara - Sammlung zeitgenössischer Kunst of Düsseldorf (Germany, 2011), *Bastards of Misrepresentation* at the Casa Asia of Barcelona (2005, Spain).

He also took part in many major group shows such as *Underbrut* at La Friche Belle de mai in Marseille (France, 2017), *Plus jamais seul, Hervé di Rosa et les arts modestes* at the Maison Rouge in Paris (France, 2017), *Come as you are: Art of the 1990's* at the Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas, Austin (USA, 2016), *Manila Vice* at the MIAM in Sète, (France, 2013), *Les Maîtres du Désordre* at the Fundacion la Caixa in Barcelona (Spain, 2013), *Les Maîtres du désordre* at the Kunst-und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in Bonn (Germany, 2012), *Reflexus* at the Arte Contemporanea of Porto (Portugal, 2009), *The Making of Art* at the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt (Germany, 2009), at the Museu Coleção Berardo of Lisbon (Portugal, 2008), *In the context of: La dégelée Rabelais* organized by the FRAC Languedoc-Roussillon in Montpellier (France, 2008), *Morts de rire* at La Panacée, in Montpellier (France, 2008), *L'Explosion* at the FRAC Languedoc-Roussillon, in Montpellier (France, 2007).

Manuel Ocampo's work is represented in several prominent public art collections such as the Museum of Contemporary Art (USA), the Oakland Museum of California, Oakland (USA), the

Laguna Art Museum (USA), the Contemporary Museum, in Honolulu (USA), the Whitney Museum of American Art (USA), the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS) (Spain), the Museo Extremeno e Iberoamericano de Arte Contemporaneo (MEIAC) (Spain), the IVAM Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno (Spain), the CAAM Centro Atlantico de Arte Moderno (Spain), the Fonds National d'Art Contemporain (France), the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum (Japan), the San Francisco Asian Art Museum (USA), the Sintra Museu de Arte Moderna (Portugal), the Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean (Mudam) (Luxembourg), the FRAC Languedoc Roussillon (France), the FRAC Ile-de-France (France), and the Museo Berado (Portugal).

Manuel Ocampo also received a number of prestigious grants and awards, such as the Giverny Residency (1998), the National Endowment for the Art (1996), the Rome Prize in Visual Arts by the American Academy in Rome (1995), the Pollock-Krasner Foundation (1995) and Art Matters Inc. (1991).

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