

Amazing Grace Art Exhibit

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Many things in this world are hyped up to be amazing. There's a race (The Amazing Race), a Southeast Asian country (Amazing Thailand), a technicolor dreamcoat (Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat) and even a fatblog (The Amazing Adventures of Diet Girl: not faster than a speeding bullet). This Lenten season, four artists will show us what is truly amazing for them—God's grace. ARTASIA Gallery presents the works of Jes Evangelista, Lucy Vergara-Fernando, Dan Mata and Camille Ver in a group exhibit titled "Amazing Grace" from April 5-19, 2010.

The show is about each artist's journey along the path of the grace of God. All of them sinners with a story to tell. All of them amazed at the grace of redemption and forgiveness in Christ. All of them grateful for the calling that God has given them to glorify Him in their painting. All of them astonished at God's mercies that are new every morning of their lives.

Having so many things in common, they banded together to encourage each other in their craft as they seek to communicate this good news of God's amazing grace that is freely offered in Christ Jesus. They humbly invite you to come and witness their individual interpretations of this grace.

About the Artists

Camille Ver, the youngest in the group, started to know more about God as she witnessed His faithfulness to their family last year. She admits that she still has a lot to learn. Every day is a struggle to do the right thing. What has given her great hope is that she knows she can rely on God even in the face of her many weaknesses.

Camille paints how she feels. Since she started getting to know Him, she has offered all her paintings to God and allows Him to direct her hand. Her abstract landscapes reflect her interaction with her Creator and His creation—carefully measuring things, being comfortable with the order of things, loving colors and taking inspiration from various settings.

Jes Evangelista is "Barnabas," the great encourager in this team. He never forgets to look back to the extremely difficult days of standing firm on his conviction to practice his craft even when it wasn't commercially viable at first. Until now, he is continually amazed at how God allowed him to hold art shows in the U.S. without any money in the bank. Winning first prize in the Art Association of the Philippines' Abstract Art Competition was also quite astounding to him.

At present, Jes is learning to strike a happy medium between teaching art lessons to eager children and producing and participating in many solo and group art exhibitions every year. He is a great inspiration to his artist-friends to faithfully hone their skills and to constantly seek opportunities for exposure. He is also the tireless and diligent organizer of this group exhibit and a precious instrument of God to encourage his teammates' faith in the Lord and their faithfulness in their work.

Lucy Vergara-Fernando thought she was an accidental artist. She wanted to be something else but she and her brother decided on impulse to enroll herself at the U.P. School of Fine Arts. After getting a degree in painting, she never felt passionate for her art at all and was quite unproductive until she reached the age of seventy-two.

An artist-friend once asked her, "How can you face God, knowing that you did not use the talent that He has given you?" God used that question, a painful personal experience, and the inspirational life and artistic career of Grandma Moses (who sold her first painting at age seventy-eight) to spur her on to a new-found painting career. He gave her the privilege of holding her first solo exhibition at age seventy-five and a second one at age seventy-seven.

Despite her failing eyesight at age eighty, she continues to see God's glory in His creation in a new way. She hopes her paintings reflect her sense of awe and wonder at God's incredible creativity. She has adopted the motto: "It's never too late to glorify God with my painting." Now she's certain that becoming an artist was not by chance after all. More like divine appointment.

Dan Mata was the reluctant member of the group at first, but quickly became the most prolific one when he started collaborating with God as a result of meditating on certain Scripture passages. The tense scenario in John 8 captured his imagination. He identified with the scribes and Pharisees' self-righteousness, but he could also relate to the sinfulness of the adulteress. Two paintings come out of this incident in the ministry of Jesus. The first one was the attempted stoning to death of the woman and Christ's searching words to the rabble that "he who is without sin should cast the first stone." The second painting is a more contemporary snapshot of a sinner who meets Christ in the Word and He tells her to go and sin no more. Both are portraits of Christ's amazing grace in offering forgiveness to all who repent and believe.

This is something new for Dan who was so used to profiting from his talent as a creative artist in the advertising industry for almost four decades. For him, the practice of art was only a source of income to feed his parents and seven siblings, and later, his own family. But now he is discovering how it can be used by the Lord to glorify Himself. Knowing that he was a great sinner, and that he needed a great Savior has made all the difference.

The ARTASIA Gallery is located on the fourth level of Megamall and is open daily from 10am-9pm.