

### ■ SPECIAL FOCUS ON CANADIAN ARTISTS



## Nicolas Ruel up close

*Inventing a new symmetry is intoxicating, and the search for this discreet sensuousness is what moves both artists and scientists—Roland Fivaz. This is who Ruel credits for his inspiration to photograph.*

■ NATASHA TOURISH

After studying international relations and film, Montreal born Nicolas Ruel undertook a series of formative trips, producing two notable photo essays on Moscow (2000) and Angkor Wat (2002), among others. He has worked with a number of architecture and design magazines as well as with Cirque du Soleil, Lalala Human Steps, and various contemporary dance companies. Be-

tween 2006 and 2010, his photographic series *Inox*, *Elements*, and *8 secondes* were featured at Galerie Orange in Montreal, Galerie Lacerte art contemporain in Quebec City, Thompson Landry Gallery in Toronto, and Galerie Seine 51 in Paris. His works have also been displayed at international contemporary art fairs in Toronto, Miami, Palm Beach, and Paris. He received the 2010 LUX Awards'

Grand Prix in four categories, adding to a previous Grand Prix LUX and a CAPIC Premier Prix from 2004. His work can be found in many private and corporate collections throughout Canada and internationally.

Ruel believes that any urban space, from a village to a megalopolis, furnishes his work with the fictional raw materials for transfiguration. "I take a formal approach to photography, based on urban design and architecture. Structuring and disarticulating these elements is the predominant theme of my work, he said. He is also fascinated by transitory and transitional sites—places that in their nature and function incarnate motion and metamorphosis, such as ports, terminals, docks, highways, construction sites, churches, and stadiums.



- ◀ Avalon
- ▼ Central park
- ▼ Cityscape
- ▼ Salam



“These spaces belong to a form of monumentality that when deserted inclines to material silence, a vacuum in the world of things and beings.”

For a number of years Ruel has used very long exposures that function like a movie set, condensing each photograph into a kind of 8-second micro-movie.

This long exposure makes it possible to assemble key moments in a single take, analogous to the process of condensation in dreams.

“Through each exposure, I intensify a symbolic charge, which I then recombine in order to reverse the codes attached to the photographed real. And because I print onto stainless steel, I need to take into account a sculptural reality, as if my work were an image being crystallized. I photograph the city in the knowledge that the metal, like a prism, is going to change reality in its turn. So it is that the imaginary cities I inventory fall into place.” He explained.



## UPCOMING SOLO

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*La rencontre du sacré et du profane* Galerie Lacerte, Montréal, Canada.