



## **Tim Roda Photographs**

By Suzanne Beal / The Seattle Weekly, Jan 25-31, 2006

Talk to a sibling about an event from your childhood, and you are likely to be surprised. Memory, even within the same clan, is subject to myriad interpretations. One way to forever fix a family's history is to take plenty of pictures. Tim Roda has re-created the past with a series of large-scale photographs in which he, his wife, and their young son are protagonists in scenes inspired by Roda's forebears. Although fictionalized, the photographer's imagery reads like cinema verit  - right down to the gritty texture of randomly taken snapshots. Closer examination, however, reveals masterfully composed images made up of deeply symbolic elements. Oftentimes ceramic structures pose as body doubles for hard-to-find props: in Untitled #39, for example, the artist appears riding on the back of a life-size, hand-crafted camel, a biblical allusion to the artist's Catholic upbringing. Untitled #63, in which the artist readies to slit the improbably long elongated neck of a clay chicken, hearkens back to his childhood memories of raising (and slaughtering) fowl. The star of Roda's productions, however, is his son, now age 7, who for the past three years has appeared either centrally or clandestinely in Roda's photographs. Think he's missing from Untitled #41, a work that refers to the artist's ailing grandfather? Look again. Small hands appear from behind a large-scale image of the elder man's face, where they cling to two-dimensional jowls. This picture also incorporates an outline of a body that frames a hanging stopwatch - a droll allusion to the passing of time, family heirlooms, and the grandfather's faulty "ticker." Spanning generations with a single flash, Roda makes his own history.