

DRY SPLASHES ON CANVAS

New York-based artist **ANGEL OTERO**, whose artistic techniques and outlook set him apart from many, recently showcased his work in the Galerie Isa in Mumbai, owing to the gallery's collaboration with the Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York, which he is associated with. Here he talks about his brand of art and all that inspires him

BY RANVIJAYSINH JHALA



PHOTO COURTESY: ANGEL OTERO AND THE LEHMANN MAUPIN GALLERY, NEW YORK

WHAT DOES ART MEAN TO YOU AND HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE YOUR ARTISTIC VISION?

I see art as yet another way of expression. Most of my art is driven by the process. I try to stay away from preconceptions.

HOW DID YOU GET INTERESTED IN ART IN ORDER TO PURSUE IT IN SUCH A BIG MANNER?

What really attracted me to art was the constant question about what it really meant. It was a constant question

about its true meaning.

HOW DID PUERTO RICO INSPIRE YOU AND INFLUENCE YOUR OUTLOOK AND CREATIVITY?

The Island really didn't directly influence my work. Of course I grew up there, so, at the back of my mind, its influence will always be there. Some of my memories influence my work, but that doesn't mean that Puerto Rico itself is specific subject matter for my art.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE MEDIUM? WHAT KIND OF TECHNIQUES DO YOU LOVE WORKING WITH?

Painting is my favourite medium; specifically oil paint, because of the historical significance it has. My work as a painter is based in process. My paintings are first laid on glass, then scrapped out of it and later, collaged onto a piece of

canvas.

HOW DO YOU ENVISION AND ACHIEVE THE ABSTRACT ART THAT YOU CREATE?

Most of these abstract paintings start out as gestural paintings that evoke abstract expressionism. Others start as very representational, with some references to historical painting. After the process of creating them, some of these representational works are blurred out such that they become abstract in a way.

WHAT MEDIUMS OF ART, WHICH YOU HAVEN'T TRIED BEFORE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO EXPERIMENT WITH?

Video—I would like to explore it more.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST MEMORABLE WORK OF ART?

Esperanza. It was one of the first oil skin pieces we ever did at the



Studio. It was actually the result of an accident. It turned into a happy moment that made me discover the possibilities of the oil skin.

IF YOU HAD TO PICK AN ERA IN HISTORY AS THE MOST FASCINATING FOR YOU, ART-WISE, WHICH WOULD IT BE?

Without a doubt, I would have to say the Abstract Expressionism Movement in New York City.

NAME SOME ARTISTS WHOSE

WORK YOU REALLY ADMIRE.
Nicolas Poussin, Gerhard Richter, Mark Bradford.

HOW DO YOU SEE YOURSELF EVOLVING AS AN ARTIST IN THE FUTURE?

Always changing I guess.

WHAT IS YOUR TAKE ON INDIAN ART AND ARTISTS FROM INDIA?
Most of the Indian-born artists that I have come across are those who have been successful in the West, like Anish

Kapoor and Subodh Gupta. I'm hoping that this trip gives me a better perspective of the art scene in Mumbai and in India.

WHAT MADE YOU COME TO INDIA TO SHOW YOUR WORK HERE?

Galerie Isa is in collaboration with Lehmann Maupin Gallery in NY. I'm honoured and humbled by this opportunity. I am only anticipating a very culturally enriching experience while here.