

# 'MY WORK DOESN'T HAVE ANY MESSAGE'

Puerto Rican artist Angel Otero talks to Zeenia F Baria about his art and inspirations

**D**edicated exclusively to international art, Galerie Isa's latest show features the works of Angel Otero, a Puerto Rico born artist based in New York. Otero's works, he says, are inspired by his life back in Puerto Rico and the relationships he shared with his family members. In a quick tête-à-tête with *BT*, he talks about himself, his art, inspiration and more...

## How did your journey in the art world begin?

My first introduction to what can be considered as art was when I was just six, when my neighbour reproduced a drawing of the cartoon character, Hello Kitty. It shocked me, the fact that there was a system to reproduce what we see. It was then that art started intriguing me — it was the beginning of a constant exploration of what art meant to me. I started making drawings of everything I saw around me. My fascination for art has only grown over the years.

## What made you choose India over other countries to display your work? Is this your first visit here?

Yes, this is my first visit to India. I've been looking forward to this trip for a while now and thanks to Ashwin Thadani, (Director, Galerie Isa) and Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York, I got this opportunity. I was greatly interested to display my work here — I'm looking forward to seeing the reactions of people



Angel Otero

towards my work, which is very unconventional.

## Could you describe some of the works in your collection?

There are two types of works, but both are based on a process specifically on the methods of painting — what painting can be and not be. Some of the works on display are still-lives that are constructed collaging dry oil paint. The others are paintings made on glass with oil paint later scrapped off glass and then collaged over the canvas. There are works that are conven-



Some of Angel Otero's works on display

tional as well as unconventional.

## Where do you get your inspiration from?

I draw my inspiration from different sources but primarily what inspires me is the history of painting. Different things spark the beginning of my work from the personal (for example: memories, family, friends, etc) to others, but at the end of the day they are paintings about painting.



## Is there any message for the viewer in your works?

If by message you mean a story, then no, my work does not have any message. My work has a lot to do with process, and process as the narrative. It shows the constant battle between me and the painting and its possibilities.

## What do you think of the contemporary Indian art scenario? Do you have any favourite artists?

I am not very familiar with the contemporary Indian art scenario. I have seen works of a few artists and noticed that many of them deal with similar subject matters like social, political, etc. I do like works of Subodh Gupta.

## What's next on your agenda?

After this show, I have two museum shows in the United States and a solo gallery show in Milan.

*Angel Otero's works can be viewed at Galerie Isa, Grea Western Building, 1st Floor, SBS Road, Colaba till June 7.*