

STYLE | FASHION | SOCIAL

# PAPER CITY

DALLAS APRIL 2016

## ART IS IN THE AIR

ARTISTS ABOUND

ENOC PEREZ  
PAOLA PIVI  
JONAH BOKAER  
DANIEL ARSHAM

THE HOUSE OF  
T. REX  
IN THE EYE OF  
PENN

10 TO SEE  
AT DALLAS  
ART FAR

PHOTOGRAPHY: MINY BYRD FOR THE PHOTO DIVISION  
ART DIRECTOR: MICHELLE KAMA, STYLE EDITOR: FRANCESCA  
BAILLARD, MODEL: DREA GRAY FOR WALLFLOWER  
MANAGEMENT, GUILLOTINE BUTTON-DOWN SHIRT  
\$750, BUTTERCUP FLOWER PRINTED FIL COUPE JACKET  
\$4,000, MATCHING EDCUT PANT WITH RUFFED CUFF  
\$1,900, RED PERSIAN LEAVES JACQUARD TIE \$325,  
PIN WITH WARRIOR'S EYES \$100, AND 18 K GOLD LEAF SANDAL  
SLIDE WITH STUD AND SNAIL DETAIL \$1100, ALL AT THE GOOD ROUTINE,  
NEWMAN MARCUS, STYLIST: TINA VOISIN FOR INDEPENDENT ARTISTS  
ACRONY, FASHION: CLOUTIER FOR JANNAH SWEGARD, HAIR AND MAKEUP  
GABBY ROSENTHAL FOR SCSHED, FUR: MONTI, ASSISTANT STYLIST: COTIE  
MACKINNON, PHOTOGRAPHER: SARAHARA OWENS GALLERY, HOUSTON

IN CONVERSATION

# MICHAEL CRAIG-MARTIN+ ENOC PEREZ

PUERTO RICO NATIVE ENOC PEREZ IS KNOWN FOR HIS ABSTRACT FIGURATIVE PAINTINGS AND DEPICTIONS OF MODERNIST BUILDINGS, FROM AN EERIE WORK OF HAVANA'S DILAPIDATED RIVIERA HOTEL TO AN ESOTERIC SERIES ON NEW YORK'S ONE WORLD TRADE CENTER. HIS WORK CONTRASTS STARKLY WITH THE VIVID CONCEPTUAL WORK OF LONDON-BASED ARTIST MICHAEL CRAIG-MARTIN, BUT THE TWO TALENTS HAVE AT LEAST ONE THING IN COMMON: BOTH HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED AS THE HONORED ARTIST FOR THE MTV RE:DEFINE AUCTION AND GALA. CRAIG-MARTIN, WHO WAS LAUDED LAST YEAR, CHATS WITH PEREZ, WHO RECEIVES THE TRIBUTE THIS MONTH. EDITED BY CHRISTINA GEYER

**MICHAEL CRAIG-MARTIN:** AS LAST YEAR'S MTV RE:DEFINE HONOREE ARTIST, I'VE BEEN ASKED TO HELP INTRODUCE YOU TO A WIDER TEXAS AUDIENCE. YOU WERE BORN IN PUERTO RICO AND DID YOUR ART STUDIES IN NEW YORK. I'M SURE YOUR BACKGROUND AND EARLY EXPERIENCE HAD A BIG IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE.

**Enoc Perez:** Being born and raised in Puerto Rico, I understood what it meant to be Puerto Rican on the island. Coming to New York, I quickly understood what it means to be Puerto Rican outside of the island — it's twice the work. It meant I had to make work that was to be undeniable if I had any aspirations of moving ahead at all. It still affects my life. Acceptance is not just handed to anyone, even less to those perceived as [outsiders], so I'm still fighting to get mine. The world of culture, after all, is not as progressive as we believe ourselves to be.

**HOW MANY LANGUAGES DO YOU SPEAK?**

Three: English, Spanish and French.

**HAVING A STRONG INTEREST IN MODERN ARCHITECTURE MYSELF, I'M FASCINATED THAT IT HOLDS SUCH A CENTRAL POSITION IN YOUR WORK. DOES ARCHITECTURE ACT AS A CRITICAL POINT OF CONTACT FOR YOU WITH CONTEMPORARY LIFE? HOW DID THIS INTEREST ARISE? DID YOU EVER CONSIDER BECOMING AN ARCHITECT?**

I'm an architecture groupie. It all comes out of admiration. Architecture looks like whom we think we are and also like who we really are. I'm after the wonder of it — the irony, the beauty. Architecture is the embodiment of the contradiction of contemporary life. It illustrates the beauty of possibility and the crudeness of reality. Look, when terrorists wanted to attack our country, it was a building they attacked as a metaphor for us as a people. Architecture is central to our identity as a country — as a people. I remember being a child and going with my parents to many of the hotels in Puerto Rico. These

buildings impressed me to a point that I still remember it — in color. Biggest impression was the Conquistador Hotel in Fajardo, Puerto Rico. I found out later it was designed by Morris Lapidus. Beautiful — years before they made it bigger and ruined it. But the wonder of the original buildings is still with me. The irony of this beauty named El Conquistador in an island that's a colony is as clear in meaning as it is confusing to a child. That's where I come from. I never really wanted to be an architect. It is just not my temper. I would like to make a house, but I would see it as something else.

**DO YOU TRAVEL SPECIFICALLY TO SEE CERTAIN BUILDINGS?**

I've done it a couple of times for commissions but not on my own buck. I stumble upon them when I travel. I particularly like to find myself in buildings that I have previously made paintings of. It's like seeing someone you have been talking to for some time and finally meeting them in person. As people do sometimes, they exceed your expectations, and at times they disappoint. It's just my way. I started making paintings of buildings mostly based on my own memory — this place of solitude. What is always surprising to me is that I imagine these buildings to be bigger. Then when I'm there, the scale is always different.

**DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AS A NATURAL PAINTER — SOMEONE FOR WHOM PAINTING IS YOUR MOST ACCESSIBLE FORM OF EXPRESSION?**

Natural painter ... Yes! It is just how I understand things. The process leads me to find what I need. Thought and action and vice versa. Natural. I could draw as a kid.

**WAS THERE A BREAKTHROUGH MOMENT IN YOUR WORK OR CAREER THAT GAVE RISE TO A MOMENTOUS CHANGE?**

Breakthroughs are those moments that all artists live for. You start working on something, and it is like jumping into an

abyss, with the hope of holding onto some breakthrough on your way down to stay alive. Every day. That I can remember, two times: first, when I realized that I had developed my own way of constructing a painting, and second, when I realized that I had something bigger in that little painting of the Normandie Hotel than I thought I had. I just knew.

**HOW MUCH DO YOU ENGAGE WITH SOCIAL MEDIA? HAS SOCIAL MEDIA MADE A DIRECT IMPACT ON YOUR WORK OR HOW YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR WORK AND ITS AUDIENCE?**

I do engage in social media. I love it. It can be empowering for artists because it allows you to create your own narrative, rather than having someone else do that on your behalf. It also gives you a bigger voice. I do like that social media lets you see almost immediately what aspect of your work resonates with others. That being said, I don't think that it affects my work a lot. I make the work that I need to make, regardless. The resonating part is just icing on the cake. The cake is to make the work.

**WHAT COMES NEXT FOR YOU? SHOWS, PROJECTS, TRAVEL, PERSONAL?**

Next, going to Dallas to get this honor that I'm most happy to receive. Will be having a show at the Dallas Contemporary, which I'm working on already. And, of course, whatever I come up with in between.

**ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE DALLAS ART SCENE? I'M SURE EVERYONE THERE WILL MAKE YOU FEEL AS WELCOME AS THEY DID ME.**

Dallas has always been good to me. One of my early shows was there with Kenneth Turner and John Runyon. I remember going to a restaurant that at the time was in this mobile home, and I had a burger with all these jalapeño peppers. Best burger I have ever had to this date. I love Dallas, and I mean that.