

## Artist to Know: Enoc Perez

An innovative NYC painter pushes the boundaries of his art in an upcoming solo show.

November 28, 2012



Biblioteca Jose M. Lazaro by Enoc Perez



Watergate by Enoc Perez

Enoc Perez's career path reads like a who's who of the New York creative world. The Puerto Rico native and former Pratt student entered the city's art scene at the height of Andy Warhol's and Roy Lichtenstein's reigns, and went on to create a style all his own, using layers of oil paint. His subjects: some of New York's most iconic buildings, including the Lever House and the Hearst Building. His paintings are currently on view at the Corcoran Gallery of Art and the College of Art and Design, in Washington, DC. And for his upcoming solo show in New York, Perez is translating his painted structures into a new form—sculpture.

The never-before-seen works will be paired with five new paintings this January at Acquavella Galleries. We took the opportunity to speak with Perez about the evolution of his art and on becoming an innovative NYC artist.

### **What was the first building that you fell in love with in New York?**

The Lever House—I just think it's perfection. It has a color, green; it's tall but feels very human; it merges the outside space with the inside. In 2007, I was commissioned to do a show there in the lobby and made four paintings of the building itself. The last time I saw one, it was in the Gramercy Park Hotel, but I've since made many versions of it that are in private collections.

### **Your next show, in January, is a set of never-before-seen sculptures. How did you make the transition from painting to sculpture, and why now?**

Form is very important to what I do—with buildings and nudes—so to make them three-dimensional just felt appropriate. I have been experimenting with sculpture for about five years. I finally got to the point where I felt good about them. I'm pairing the sculptures with paintings of buildings from early in my career, which I am repainting in my current, more abstract way. I feel that they are a lot more similar to sculpture this way.

### **What was it like being an up-and-coming painter in New York on the heels of Warhol and Lichtenstein?**

When I came to New York, in 1986, as an art student at Pratt, I spent a lot of time trying to figure out how to

paintings that fit into the local culture. I saw how Warhol used printmaking in painting; I got to look at a generation of artists from the '80s who were all very formative. New York was, and still is today, the most exciting place to be. But today artists can work from anywhere; then, there was no Internet—to make it as an artist, you had to be here.

**What's your experience of working here now?**

Very different. My first studio was in Dumbo in 1994. Now I'm in Midtown, surrounded by offices, and I find that I follow the 9-to-5 schedule, because you kind of want to be a part of that bigger thing—the inspiring energy of New York.



Marina Towers, Chicago by Enoc Perez



IBM Tower by Enoc Perez



Lever House, NY by Enoc Perez