

Angel Otero

Broken Record

September 26 – October 26, 2020

87 Newtown Lane, East Hampton, NY 11937

Open daily, 10pm–6pm

Harper's is pleased to present *Broken Record*, an exhibition of seven oil-paint-and-fabric collages on canvas and five oil-stick drawings on paper by Angel Otero. Marking the artist's first presentation at Harper's, this show follows Otero's several-year relationship with the gallery as a friend and collector, forged by a kindred interest in the interplay between books and art. Harper's is open to the public seven days a week; no appointment is necessary to visit.

In his elaborately textural canvases, Otero harnesses the potential of painting to convey personal memory and identity through his practice. His work, which ranges from sprawling collages to thickly layered panels, departs from an innovative foundational technique: he paints representational imagery onto glass sheets, scrapes off the partially dried pigment, and reapplies the resulting "skins" onto a fresh surface to produce multi-layered compositions. This generative approach yields unexpected synchronicities of color and form, reinvigorating the visual languages of collage and painting through a gradual process of reuse and accumulation.

For this exhibition, Otero continues his practice of recycling and recombining layers of oil paint while mining his personal history and earlier figurative work for subject matter. Created in the solitude of upstate New York during the Covid-19 lockdown, they incorporate motifs inspired by his grandmother's home in San Juan where the artist grew up: from her wooden dining chairs and crisp white bathtub to her potted plants and blue-tiled floors. Rather than recount specific narratives or experiences, these paintings explore the enduring weight of memory and the lingering impact of past experience. Otero extrapolates his childhood impressions into dizzyingly surreal compositions, while aggregating ambiguous visual markers extracted from hazy recollections. Plants sprout from sofa cushions, fish glide above domestic furnishings, and derelict ladders stretch off-frame in scenes that evoke the hypnagogic state between waking and dreaming. Marked by a frenetic energy that evinces the volatility of past and present crises, from the global pandemic to Puerto Rico's earthquakes, these introspective works deftly consider painting's ability to transport the past into the present and the personal into the universal.

Born in San Juan in 1981, **Angel Otero** is a New York-based artist best known for his process-based paintings, collages, and sculptural works that venerate the inherent qualities of his material of choice, oil paint. He received his BFA in 2007 and his MFA in 2009 from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and is the recipient of the Leonore Annenberg Fellowship in the Visual Arts. Solo exhibitions of his work have been organized at Lehmann Maupin, New York (2019); the Bronx Museum of the Arts (2017); and Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (2016); among other museums and galleries. Otero's work is in numerous public and private collections, including the Berezdivin Collection, Puerto Rico; the Bronx Museum of the Arts; the DePaul Art Museum, Chicago; and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond.