

Angel Otero

March 7—April 20, 2019

501 West 24th Street, New York

@lehmannmaupin | #angelotero

Opening Reception: Thursday, March 7, 6-8 PM



Red Milagro, 2018, oil skins on fabric, 107 x 142 x 5 inches, 271.8 x 360.7 x 12.7 cm. Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul.

New York, February 6, 2019—Lehmann Maupin is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Angel Otero. The New York-based artist will debut a series of recent, large-scale tapestry-like oil paintings that hang entirely free from a stretcher bar. Over the last decade, Otero has developed physically rigorous and experimental techniques to push the boundaries of painting. Drawing much of his inspiration from the inherent qualities of oil paint, Otero uses collage and materiality as he explores the potential for abstraction to engage issues of identity as well as form, color, and line. The

artist will be present for an opening reception at the gallery on Thursday, March 7, from 6 to 8 PM.

Otero's practice is rooted in the history of painting and abstraction. Through a methodically innovative process, the artist paints representationally onto large sheets of glass, scrapes the partially dried oil paint from the surface, and then reassembles and often collages the "skins" into multi-layered compositions. For his most recent body of work, Otero builds upon the paintings featured in his 2017 exhibition *Angel Otero: Elegies* at The Bronx Museum of the Arts, where he premiered a series of large-scale paintings composed of fragments of previous discarded paintings and cut scraps that he had accumulated in his studio over the years. These fragments—smaller, and more varied in size, shape, and palette—introduce new conceptual and aesthetic elements in his work. Whereas previous paintings were collaged from an individual skin that Otero both carved into and painted onto, these new paintings incorporate years of saved and salvaged materials, dexterously arranged together on a scale akin to that of individual brush strokes. Otero's impulse to reuse materials is linked to his long-held interest in their potential to convey history, memory, and the temporal nature of his practice.

These recent paintings also reference Otero's personal history more directly. *Red Milagro* (2018), composed of pieces of past paintings, connects his process with the Milagro objects that fascinated him as a child. The small, metal Catholic charms affixed to sacred objects, which he eventually inherited as precious family

heirlooms, are carried for protection or luck. By collecting and then collaging fragments of past work, Otero imbues each painting with a similar reverent display that pays homage to his familial tradition as well as his own history as a painter.

Otero has also begun to incorporate found material such as handmade lace into his paintings, which act as markers of his memories of Puerto Rico. The island's recent hardship in the aftermath of the 2017 hurricane has brought into poignant focus his regard for and the influence of the people and places that shaped his earliest and most cherished visual memories. These personal references are interwoven amid the art historic layers within his paintings—quoting artists from Nicolas Poussin to Willem de Kooning to Eva Hesse. The inspiration for these ambitious paintings, stitched together to create a perfect rhythm of positive and negative spaces, can be visibly linked to the canonical masterpieces from art history as well as his grandmother's more humble, yet also masterful, crocheted lace.

Through years of careful observation of the intricacies and structural tendencies of material, Otero has forged an individualistic process and style through the use of his paint "skins" and the endeavor of conflating the genres of both representational and abstract painting. For Otero, a solution to expanding the genre of painting in contemporary art lies in an exploration of this transition between representation and abstraction. In this way, the paint itself emerges as a crucial conceptual component, mobilizing ideas of chance, conveyance, and aesthetic vernacular, while the images and themes it visualizes become fragments or parts of a history energized by the material.

About the artist

Angel Otero (b. 1981, Santurce, Puerto Rico; lives and works in Brooklyn, New York) received his MFA in 2009 and his BFA in 2007 from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Solo exhibitions of his work have been organized at The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (2017); Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (2016); Centro Atlantico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain (2015); SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA (2013); and Contemporary Art Museum, Raleigh, NC (2012). Select group exhibitions and biennials featuring his work include *Inherent Structure*, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH (2018); *Surface Area*, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2016); *Nexo / Nexus: Latin American Connections in the Midwest*, DePaul Art Museum, Chicago (2016); *6th Prague Biennale* (2013); *El Museo Bienal The [S] Files*, El Museo del Barrio, New York (2011) and *Queens International 2012: Three Points Make a Triangle*, Queens Museum, New York (2012), among others. Otero is the recipient of the Leonore Annenberg Fellowship in the Visual Arts. His work can be found in collections at DePaul Art Museum, Chicago; Istanbul Modern, Istanbul; Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS; the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC; and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA.

About Lehmann Maupin

Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin founded Lehmann Maupin in 1996. The gallery represents a diverse range of American artists, as well as artists and estates from across Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and the Middle East. It has been instrumental in introducing numerous artists from around the world in their first New York exhibitions. Known for championing artists who create groundbreaking and challenging forms of visual expression, the gallery prioritizes personal investigations and individual narratives. Lehmann Maupin prizes the distinct conceptual approaches that its artists offer on the essential matters that shape international culture today, including gender, class, religion, history, politics, and globalism. In 2013, with two locations in New York, significant interest in its artists' abroad, and growing opportunities in new

markets, Lehmann Maupin opened an additional location in Hong Kong, followed by Seoul in 2017. For more information on the gallery and its artists, visit www.lehmannmaupin.com.

Current & Upcoming Exhibitions

Margherita Manzelli, *Bluebird*, Through February 24, 536 West 22nd Street, NEW YORK

McArthur Binion, *Hand:Work*, Through March 2, 501 West 24th Street, NEW YORK

Gilbert & George, *THE BEARD PICTURES*, Through March 15, Pedder Building, HONG KONG & 74-18, Yulgok-ro 3-gil, SEOUL

Jennifer Steinkamp, *Impeach*, February 28—April 13, 536 West 22nd Street, NEW YORK

Erwin Wurm, March 25—May 11, Pedder Building, HONG KONG

Nicholas Hlobo, March 21—May 18, 74-18, Yulgok-ro 3-gil, SEOUL

Tim Rollins and K.O.S., Curated by Ian Berry, April 18—June 15, 536 West 22nd Street, NEW YORK

Heidi Bucher, April 29—June 15, 501 West 24th Street, NEW YORK

For more information on Angel Otero or other Lehmann Maupin artists, please contact Kathryn McKinney at +1 212 255 2923 or kathryn@lehmannmaupin.com.

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