

PEACH PATROL

ERIC MACK

An Artist Taking Flight

A month before his solo exhibit entitled “Composite Realities” debuts at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, Eric Mack waffles between plucky suspicion and sleep-deprived euphoria in his Westside studio.

“Every day in here is like a concert,” the 31-year-old painter says of his new series of abstract compositions. The mixed-media paintings, to hang in the airport atrium beginning in mid December, have evolved from layering collective materials such as natural fibers, leaves and textiles with iridescent glitter and manipulated photocopies. The paint-splattered studio floor is littered with empty acrylic tubes and piled with past work, Lilliputian versions of the six-foot canvases hanging on the walls. The paintings depart from their otherwise cubist tendencies with the incorporation of anatomical and astrological symbols. “They are each like time capsules,” Mack says. “They do reference how we communicate with each other now.”

An Atlanta College of Art graduate, Mack’s work has shown in galleries across the country. Recently his pieces have been acquired by developer Harold Dawson, Jr., and as part of the permanent collection within the Embassy of Sierra Leone. But the airport’s atrium is a venue perhaps more trafficked than any public art space in the city. “I want the work to excite people who have never stepped foot in a museum, as well as the creative community,” Mack says. “I want them to feel like, ‘Man, I better go home and start mixing some colors.’”

—Amy Flurry

JUST THE FACTS

What particular allure does Atlanta hold for you and other painters? “A lush, natural environment, as well as an opportunity to live affordably and produce work.”

Little-known fact: “I was *this close* to being an Eagle Scout.”

Secret Westside insider tips: “Spoon on Marietta Street for the best Thai food, and the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center.”

After-dark hangout: “MJQ and Rare.”

If this show had a soundtrack, what would it be? “Virgo Blaktro’ by Felix Da Housecat.”

Book on your nightstand: “*The Complete Earth—A Satellite Portrait of Our Planet* by Douglas Palmer.”

Who are your greatest influences? “Zaha Hadid, Nelson Stevens, Jimi Hendrix, Sara Sze, Jean Michel-Basquiat, Herbie Hancock, Kid Creole and the Coconuts, Pizzicato Five, Stereolab, Powell Peralta, Blonde Redhead, N.E.R.D.”



PHOTOGRAPH BY MALI AZIMA