

MIAMI
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CURIOUS CONVERSATIONS: ARTIST PEPE MAR

Isabella Masucci
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Looking for a pop of inspiration after a bite at OTL? Check out Miami-based, Mexican-born assemblage artist, Pepe Mar, whose latest works are on view in his summer studio and exhibition located at MO104 (across from OTL) for a limited time.

Pepe's work borrows from many places... second-hand stores, science fiction books, magazines, commercial design, and social media... to create works that he describes as "abstract and anthropomorphic barometers of contemporary culture." An accomplished contemporary artist, his pieces have appeared in the New York Times, ARTnews, Art in America, Art + Auction, the Art Newspaper, and Artnet.

Pepe will be working on his collages as a Miami Design District artist-in-studio, and you are invited to check them out during opening hours. In celebration of this studio and exhibition, we took some time to speak to Pepe about his work.



Can you tell me about the live 3D collage piece you are working on in the space?

The collage that I am working on in my workspace behind the gallery is one of my signature collage pieces - made with cut-outs from magazines, books, and encyclopedias. Their process of

creation is a lengthy and time-consuming one, as assemblage pieces become endless, as they start with the collecting of material, and just keep going!

The assemblage pieces can take weeks and months. They are the works that take me the longest to create and where I get the inspiration for my entire practice.



Above, Paprika

I noticed a repetitive figure that occurs in your work, who is it, and what does it mean?

That figure is called Paprika ... I started to sketch them on napkins when I used to go to Twist [nightclub] in SOBE. Later this figure took shape as my avatar and came to embody a whole universe within my collage practice. In the latest assemblage works, Paprika is taking on new forms in many different materials.

When I look at your work, I see a lot of the imagery that is in line with Guillermo del Toro's Pan's Labyrinth, do you feel that your work also borrows from Mexican folklore & catholic traditions?

Yes, I have been a fan of Guillermo del Toro for years ... I was very pleased to see one from his personal collection at his retrospective at LACMA. We share a fascination with monsters and the Mexican Alebrije sculptures, which comes through in my expression and through my exploration of Paprika.

On that note, what artists do you feel most influence your personal style?

One of my most important influences is fashion designer John Galliano. His repurposing and upcycling really speaks to me. I love mixing high and low. I just got this Graffiti Tabi Boot in the Design District's Maison Margiela store, which I am pairing with some second-hand jeans from Out of the Closet. This mix is what my work is all about.



Pepe's art practice is inspired by fashion, pop culture, subcultural history, and more, which results in colorful and psychedelic mixed-media collages, sculptures, and installations. Represented by David Castillo Gallery, Pepe's recent solo exhibition "DragonFruit" at the Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh received critical acclaim.

We can't wait for you to experience this chapter of Miami Design District's cultural happenings.