

## **NOW at the Corcoran**

### **Enoc Perez: Utopia**

Enoc Perez describes his paintings as “accumulations of time.” Throughout his career, he has restored the element of time—personal memory, political history, and physical decay—to modernist buildings once envisioned to transcend such concerns. *Utopia* presents two new bodies of work focusing on the Marina Towers in Chicago and the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C.

On a basic level, Perez’s work is about painting—its histories, its ambitions to arrest time and place, and its faltering condition in contemporary life. Yet there is little traditional about his technique, which uses photographs and found imagery and which combines elements of brushwork with a sort of primitive printmaking. To create his works, Perez first makes a series of preparatory drawings on paper, coating their backs with each color that will be in the final painting. He then places the drawing onto the canvas and traces the image, pressing on paint layer by layer, building up a composite image that is at times 30 layers deep. This transfer process mimics the processes of mechanical reproduction as much as it adheres to conventional painting techniques.

The “Marina Towers” series consists of eight renditions of the Chicago skyscrapers built in 1962. Investigating the buildings as symbols of promise and power, Perez obsessively refigures them, shading his palette of red, orange, and purple according to mood and time of day. The works encourage intense, repeated observation of structures that are at once static and ever-shifting, compressing the arc of days and years into the confines of eight pictures.

In the monumental diptych of the Watergate made for the Corcoran’s rotunda, Perez depicts the iconic D.C. architectural complex built between 1963 and 1971. In this work, Perez paints directly on top of a printed photograph, literally obscuring the building’s familiar facade. Calling to mind a place and event known through stories and newspaper images, built up and concealed over time, Perez’s paintings strive to solidify the processes of memory and the vagaries of experience.

Enoc Perez was born in Puerto Rico in 1967 and lives and works in New York. All paintings are courtesy of the artist and Acquavella Galleries, New York.