

ART

Artist Enoc Perez Paints the Great Cities That Never Were

By Justin Jones November 26th 2013



Enoc Perez’s first monograph is out, showcasing more than two decades of his greatest work, including his famous paintings of modernist buildings that capture a time that almost was.

Puerto-Rican born artist, Enoc Perez, is best known for his large paintings of landmark modernist buildings: the Lever House, the Seagram Building, and Eero Saarinen’s TWA Terminal. These paintings evoke nostalgia for the long forgotten utopian ambitions that largely defined modernist architecture in the early to mid-twentieth century.

The artist’s first comprehensive monograph, *Enoc Perez*, published by Assouline this month, showcases over one hundred color plates spanning two decades of the artist’s work—including drawings, prints, and sculptures.

After the destruction of the First World War, architects began using new materials that originated from the Industrial Revolution—steel, glass, and iron—to imagine new landscapes built on the promise of a perfect world. While these utopian cities never came to fruition, the buildings that were erected symbolized a promise of technology and the future.

Within these large-scale paintings, it is easy to see how Perez is “attracted to the visionary optimism that inspired these Modernist structures ... as well as the faded glamour and bygone idealism that these buildings embody today,” as friend and collector Peter Brant wrote in the forward to the book.

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Perez invented his own technique for rendering these monumental paintings—mimicking the silkscreen process used by modern Pop artist, Andy Warhol. The occasional deteriorating effect that this produces, along with Perez’s use of vibrant colors, echoes Brant’s statement—Perez presents the optimism that was in all its faded glamour.

In addition to his monograph, Mr. Perez released another book, *Gilles Mendel by Enoc Perez*, available this month at J. Mendel. The collaboration between the artist and the J. Mendel designer features collages by Perez inspired by all things Mendel—including photographs, sketches, runway shows, and fabric.

Photo by Craig Barritt/Getty