

KANTOR GALLERY

PRESS



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W Fast Forward

The Max Factor

Max Eisenstein first got into art as a great car-waxing/Manhattan's kid, but he kept his graffiti skills under wraps while studying painting (and traditional history) at Washington University in St. Louis. "When I was in school I refused to bring [graffiti] into the studio," he explains at his shared New York studio space. "But then I was like, maybe I gotta rethink water damage and figure out a way to make painting mine."

The much-honored (and 25-year-old) artist, who will have his first solo show at the Kantor Gallery in Los Angeles this month, has done just that, creating a distinctive style that combines technical skill with an expansive hand to create large-scale works like *David-50 Percent*, where pink sweeps of paint represent abstract two images of Eisenstein, and *Hydrogen*, in which Mark Spicely's tangled hair is together to form an abstract bouquet of flowers.

And like his mentor, painter Chuck Close, Eisenstein works from photographs—initially suspects that show him and his friends who got together in his brother Lou's mid-length. He has been working on and off at Close's restaurant since the one met at an art opening six years ago, doing everything from drawing Close's hair to painting him at charity events in the Hamptons. "He had this instantaneous mental ability of each other," says Eisenstein with a laugh. "[And] there was an instant business affiliation." Along the way, he also found time to assist painter Cecily Brown for a year and a half.

But the fall Eisenstein will leave the New York art scene behind—he's moving to Los Angeles (at its time for his solo debut). The legs behind his unconventional, somewhat enigmatic "A lot of people in New York know me through Chuck or Cecily, so I have to do all I can to not ride that two-a-crowns," he says. "Nobody from New York goes to L.A. to paint, so I figure I gotta be out and get known." —JANE BROWN



Max Eisenstein in his studio space.

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