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Oscar Murillo: 'I want them to come into the show and skip a heartbeat'

The Colombian painter on sudden fame, surviving the backlash, and finding inspiration at 36,000 feet

Artist Oscar Murillo in his studio in Tottenham, London: 'The genesis of it all is in myself. My own anxieties, my own anger' © Cian Oba-Smith

Peter Aspden MARCH 29, 2019 0

In the early years of this decade, Oscar Murillo, a 33-year-old Colombian artist who lives and works in London, became an art-world phenomenon. One minute he was doing a masters degree at the Royal College of Art, supplementing his income by working as a cleaner at London's Gherkin building. Then word began to get around about his work: vibrant, clever paintings that spoke of cultural dislocation, using a bold range of techniques — montage, wordplay, abstract expressionism.

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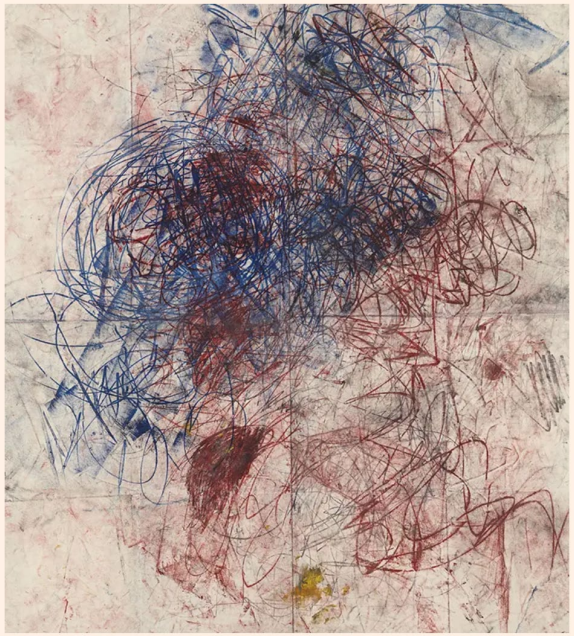

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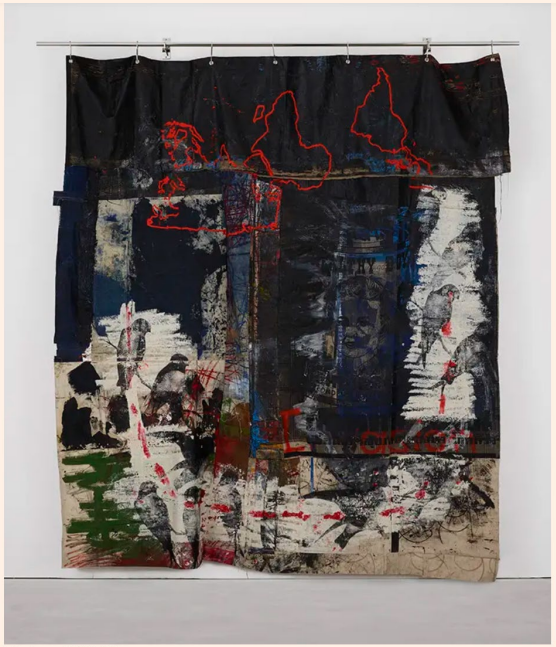

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The “Amnesia” part of the show’s title is a “broader statement about the world”. He says the past couple of years show that the political lessons of history are being forgotten. On the continent of his homeland, for instance: “What is happening in Venezuela, I fear that Iraq is repeating itself in a Latin American context. It is a complicated landscape, with its own internal agenda. It is not as simple as changing the government.”

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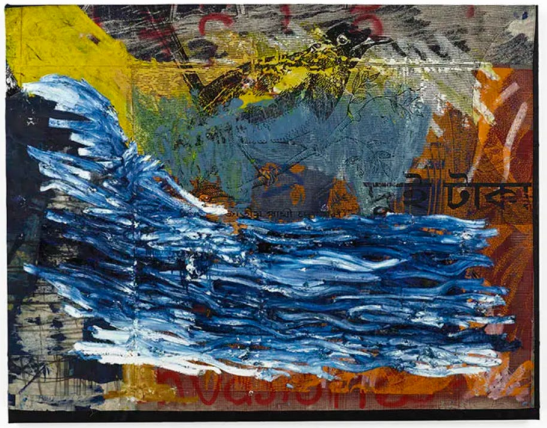

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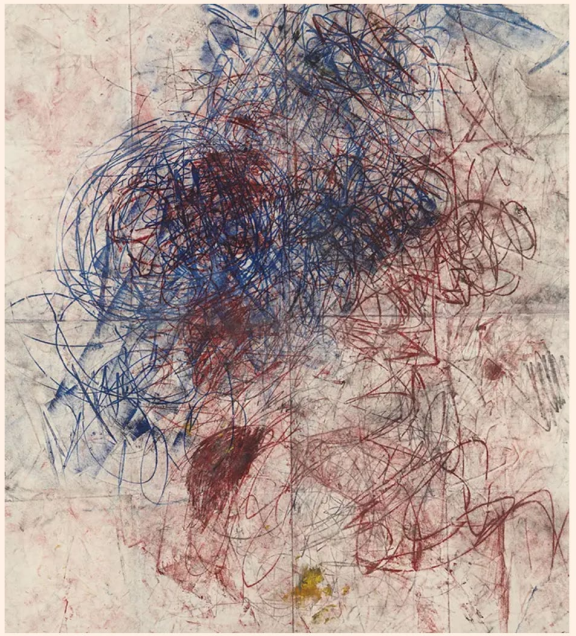

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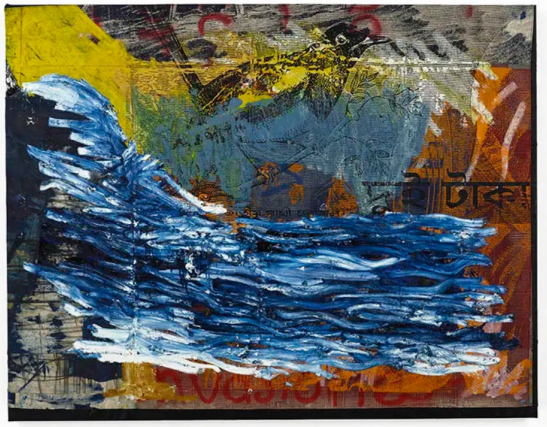

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