

"Face First," *Cultured Magazine*, February/March 2022

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This March, self-taught figurative painter Marcus Brutus steps out in a big way with a landmark debut at Harper's gallery in New York. Before the show opened, the Brooklyn-based artist opened his studio to Cultured for a sneak peek at a new body of work influenced by his recent rabbit hole: high-fidelity speakers.

◀ YOU ARE SELF-TAUGHT. DOES THAT MEAN YOU'VE SPENT A LOT OF TIME LOOKING AT BOOKS? Well, I've drawn my entire life and I would just save images, anything I liked. HOW DID THIS BODY OF WORK BEGIN? IS THERE A THEME LEADING THE WAY? I was already working on these images when the Harper's show came up. Throughout the works, there was a musical or recording theme because I have climbed into high-fidelity recording systems over the pandemic for some reason. I just found ways to put that into the



work. SALONS ARE A RECURRING SCENE IN YOUR WORK. WHAT ATTRACTS YOU TO THAT SPACE?

It's just something that's been a constant in my life. From when I was younger, my dad would take me to the barbershop and then as I got older, it just became a thing where you do it every two weeks; you get a haircut. On Saturdays, the

women in my family would always wake up early to go to the hair salon. WHAT'S YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO REALISM?

I never want the burden of capturing reality, so I just let it be after a certain point. When I was teaching myself how to paint, I got to a certain point, and I really embraced my limitations. I try to capture something that feels a bit real, but then, obviously, I go against that with the extremes of bright colors. WHEN YOU ARE PAINTING WHAT COMES FIRST? The face.

Portrait By QUỲN ĐAKAO