

DALLAS

MODERN LUXURY

THE RADAR | ART

Doc Star

Art is the new medicine for one Dallas M.D.

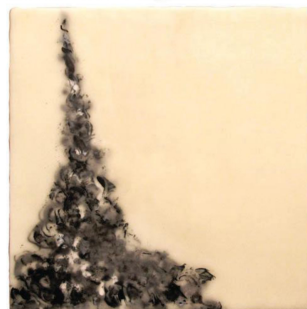
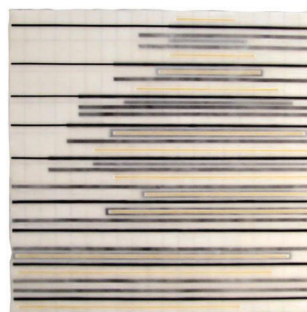
| By Steve Carter | Photography by Ben Garrett |

For a physician who didn't actively nurture his artistic life until 1993, Winston Lee Mascarenhas has come a long way. "Over the last 10 years or so I've leaned on art as sort of a release valve from the seriousness and the fast pace of my medical practice," he reveals. Losing himself in the creative process has been healing for the artist. "You couldn't pay for this kind of therapy," he adds with a laugh.

At his studio recently, the quietly gregarious encaustic painter was surrounded by work tables, myriad bags of beeswax, pigment and art books, with his recent works populating the walls. Mascarenhas' relaxed demeanor belied the realities of both his upcoming exhibition deadline and his day gig as a doc. "Fluctuations in Encaustic," Mascarenhas' exhibition at Craighead Green Gallery, on view through Feb. 12, is an examination of the artist's rhythmic, geometrically based works as well as his abstract, atmospheric musings. "Encaustic is very tactile, very sensory, and there's a warmth and depth and an organic nature to it," he says. "I like to get my hands in it."

Born in Laredo to Brazilian immigrant parents, both medical professionals themselves, Mascarenhas, 58 and single, grew up mainly in Austin and didn't consider art as a career. By high school he'd settled on pre-med, although a flirtation with an art class piqued his curiosity, especially after he won first prize in a juried show. He's been a physician now for 31 years, 28 as a specialist in anesthesiology; 26 of those years he worked with trauma patients. Recently he's cut back to part-time, opening up his schedule for time in the studio.

"I've seen everything," he says thoughtfully. "That's why my art is so important to me...it's a joyous journey, without pressure and life-saving



WAX TRACKS!
From top: "Flux 2," encaustic on panel, 20 inches x 20 inches. "Flux 11," encaustic on panel, 10 inches x 10 inches. Winston Lee Mascarenhas in his studio.

obligations. I really tend towards abstract and geometric minimalism as a total opposite of exactness."

Although he began his artistic expression painting in acrylics, Mascarenhas has truly found himself working in encaustic. The medium, also known as hot wax painting, involves melted beeswax, damar resin, and pigment, and Mascarenhas enjoys it for its forgivingness, archival nature, malleability and the element of chance inherent. "Sometimes you have some really wonderful surprises," he enthuses.

Inspired by Jasper Johns, Piet Mondrian and some of the "rock star" encaustic artists he's studied with, Mascarenhas' work is a fascinating combination of disparate languages. His geometric pieces are minimal, soothingly musical, and in this series involve pigment, oil, ink, graphite and collage along with encaustic. "With the wax and the multiple layering it creates a harmony, a subtle movement," he observes. "You feel like you can go inside the painting...it pulls you in."

Intuition and intentionality go hand-in-hand in his creative process, and the artist's abstract images are strikingly evocative. "There's nebulousness in the work sometimes that evolves into something that has some serenity to it...it's almost like you're going into another world." 1011 Dragon St., 214.855.0779, craigheadgreen.com, wlmascarenhas.com ■

