

ARTIST PROFILE

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Angelo Antonio Maristela is a Filipino-American visual artist who has steadily carved a place for himself on the international art scene. A natural hyperrealist, he began his journey in portraiture at a remarkably young age. While various artists have influenced his development, his early creative drive was rooted in personal experience. Raised by a single mother, young Angelo often found himself alone in their modest apartment while his mother worked. Though kind neighbors occasionally checked in, he spent many hours by himself, finding solace and stimulation in scraps of paper, pencils, pens, and scissors. The paper figures he fashioned lacked faces, prompting him to invent and draw them—an exercise that sharpened his imagination and ignited a lifelong passion for portraiture. By his teenage years, he was already earning from commissioned portrait works.

Angelo's artistic inclinations extended beyond the canvas. In his youth, he dabbled in acting, appearing in films, theater, and television shows, and took on roles in ramp, fashion, print, and TV ad commercial modeling. He also possesses a gift for singing and voice mimicry, further underscoring his diverse creative talents.

He initially pursued a degree in AB English at St. Paul University in Tuguegarao, but ultimately followed his true calling, enrolling in the Bachelor of Fine Arts program with a major in Advertising at Far Eastern University in Manila. His academic excellence was evident—he consistently earned top marks for his projects and was frequently exempted from exams. His professors recognized his talent early on and continue to hold him in high regard to this day.

Angelo has spent years refining his mastery of portraiture, a form of art that demands both technical precision and emotional depth. Each of his portraits is imbued with lifelike detail and soul, reflecting his deep commitment to the craft. In recent years, he has ventured into contemporary art, exploring bold colors, fluid forms, and abstract elements while maintaining traces of his hyperrealist roots. This creative evolution has expanded his artistic range, positioning him at the intersection of traditional techniques and modern expression.

LIVING IN DOHA, QATAR

In 2009, Angelo was presented with an opportunity to work as a Creative Designer for a premier interior design firm in Doha, Qatar. During his time in the country, he created an impressive portfolio of artworks that he considers part of the lasting legacy he left in the nation that became home to him and his family for over seven years.

Many of his works remain on display in some of Qatar's most prestigious residences—particularly in The Pearl, Doha's most exclusive address—gracing the walls of luxurious private units owned by members of the elite. In addition to private collections, Angelo also completed several high-profile commissioned pieces for prominent establishments, including restaurant chains, hospitals, financial institutions, and corporate offices. His clientele included a number of distinguished personalities, from influential business magnates to Qatari sheikhs.

Angelo also made history as the only Filipino artist, at the time, to be accepted into an exclusive Qatari art group, composed mainly of Arab artists. His works were also featured frequently in magazines (as featured story or as covers), newspapers, and online publications. A quick Google search of his name will lead to several features and examples of his most notable works and accomplishments.

He held several exhibitions in Qatar, most of them solo shows. One of the most notable was a horse-themed exhibit sponsored by one of the country's most powerful and wealthy figures—the chairman of Qatar's largest conglomerate. The exhibition took place at a vast commercial facility in Al Samariya, which also housed a horse track and riding school. The event was covered by Qatar TV and received coverage in various print publications, further cementing Angelo's reputation in the region.

ART SHOWS/EXHIBITIONS

In addition to his participation in the Qatar exhibition, Angelo has had the honor of showcasing his work at several prestigious international art events.

In 2015, he represented the Philippines as the sole delegate to the Chianciano Biennale in Tuscany, Italy—an opportunity that earned his work a thoughtful and positive review from the International Confederation of Art Critics (see attached).

Since relocating to the United States, Angelo—though relatively new to the American art scene—has already made a notable impact. He has participated in various exhibitions across the country: New Jersey, New York, Nevada, and Florida. One of his most significant U.S. projects was a massive 27-by-8-foot mural displayed at the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Times Square, New York City. Centered on themes of environmental conservation and global challenges, the mural, which was

completed and installed shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic, proved hauntingly prophetic. It depicted scenes of lockdowns, wildfires, and species extinction—realities that soon unfolded in the months that followed.

IMMIGRATION TO THE USA

Angelo arrived in the United States in April 2016. Just over a year after initiating the immigration process, he and his dependents were granted permanent residency under the EB1-A category— the Alien of Extraordinary Ability visa. Also known as the Einstein Visa, this is the same immigrant visa awarded to Albert Einstein. This highly selective and rigorous category is reserved for individuals who have demonstrated sustained national or international acclaim in their field. To qualify, Angelo submitted extensive documentation proving he belonged to "that small percentage who has risen to the very top of the field of endeavor."

In early 2025, the family made the decision to pursue U.S. citizenship. Before the close of the first quarter, Angelo and his family officially became American citizens. While Angelo's artistic achievements paved the way, the family attributes their success to mainly to God's divine providence and through everyone's hard work and perseverance. Embracing their new identity with pride, they are committed to giving back to their community and sharing their rich cultural heritage as Filipino-Americans.

LATEST WORK/PROJECTS

One of Angelo's most cherished bodies of work is the "Bread Series," a long-running project that features portraits of both prominent and everyday individuals holding a symbolic piece of bread. The recurring image serves as a metaphor, emphasizing the idea that everyone has something meaningful to share with the world.

In 2024, Angelo embarked on a new creative journey—a modern art series that marks a bold shift in style and scale. He aims to complete over ten large-scale modern pieces by the end of 2025. With research fully completed, one painting nearly finished, and several others underway, this ambitious series is well in motion.

Parallel to this, Angelo is also dedicated to a separate collection of historically themed artworks. This endeavor began in 2018 with the painting "Di Ka Pasisiil," a vivid tribute to the historical Battle of Mactan, which now belongs to a distinguished collector in New York. Recently, he completed the painting, "Iron Clad," a life-like portrait of General Douglas MacArthur, and is midway through two additional pieces in the series.

A significant milestone came in October 2024, when his portrait of General MacArthur was formally accepted into the permanent collection of the West Point Museum—an honor that marked a pivotal moment in his career. Following this recognition, Angelo began receiving more portrait commission offers, a development that presents both opportunity and challenge. While his current focus remains on completing his modern art series, the continued demand for his portraiture highlights his enduring appeal in that genre—whether or not it's currently on the menu.

RECOGNITIONS/ACCOLADES

Beyond his usual recognition such as emerging as a finalist or winner in numerous art competitions or being awarded "Best in Show" in group exhibitions, Angelo places special value on the honors he received after moving to the United States. These accolades reflect not only his artistic talent but also his growing impact within the broader community.

Between 2017 and 2018, Angelo's creative work was celebrated with several prestigious awards. He received special recognition from *I Am Pinoy, Proud Ako* for his meaningful contributions to the Filipino-American community. He was also awarded a Citation of Honor by the Borough of Queens, New York, acknowledging his excellence in the arts and his civic engagement. Additionally, he was honored with the Award of Excellence for the Arts by PACCAL, recognizing his artistic influence and dedication to the cultural landscape.

In 2019, Angelo achieved another milestone when he was named the recipient of the Dr. Jose P. Rizal Award for Excellence in the Arts. This esteemed award, presented by the highly respected Knights of Rizal organization, stands as a testament to Angelo's enduring commitment to artistic excellence and cultural heritage.

ARTIST STATEMENT

"The colors of my canvas speak not to what I see. Each is mixed in the well of my emotions."

I believe that every person has the potential to be an artist. Our Creator is the Master Artist, and His work surrounds us. We see art in the world's many forms—fashion, the diverse expressions of makeup, meticulously manicured gardens and parks, the play of lights and color, and the presentation of food in endless variety. Everyone expresses creativity in their own way. With that understanding, I strive to excel in my own artistic path and leave a meaningful mark.

As a hyperrealist, I have devoted myself to mastering portraiture and detailed painting since my youth. But the vastness of art inspires me to go beyond the confines of a single style. I have since expanded into contemporary art, dedicating years to researching and developing a distinctive form of abstraction that can only be associated with me. The materials I use are not ordinarily found in stores—they are the result of meticulous experimentation, custom-formulated blends of colors, mediums, and even industrial components. This journey has led me into a new dimension of contemporary art, where my fluid, expressive works evoke both thought and emotion. Those familiar with my pieces can recognize them instantly through their characteristic flow, texture, and brushstrokes—my artistic DNA.

My artwork is geared toward giving back to God for the talent that He blessed me with.. Ultimately, my goal is not just to provide a feast for the eyes but also to inspire. Every piece involves thoughtful planning and in-depth research, reflecting my commitment to substance as well as style. Through my work, I aim to leave a lasting legacy—art that resonates across generations, inspiring and encouraging others to see beauty in things around us, find meaning and purpose in life and pursue their own creative callings.

Karen Lapon

International Confederation of Art Critics

http://issuu.com/museodarte/docs/angelo_maristela

The Critique

Angelo Antonio Maristela is a naturally gifted artist that cannot be circumscribed within a given style or movement as his qualities span over a varied range of nomenclatures.

He masters Hyperrealism through portraits of such astonishing faithfulness that remind us of Richter, Estes and Organ. His more figurative works and landscapes are of an exceptional beauty reminiscent of the great nineteenth century British landscape painters such as Constable and Stubbs.

Maristela's abstract and figurative expressionist paintings are representations of a mysterious dimension that trigger our deepest instincts and force them out until they whirl and float around us, leaving us entrapped in the amazing disclosed secrets of the universe he recreates.

His canvases are explosions of mainly analogous colours whose combination creates an extraordinarily magical atmosphere. The juxtaposition of delicate and strong hues highlights Angelo's taste for colour and his understanding of its multifaceted visual language.

This wonderfully complete and talented artist takes the viewer on a journey to the very origins of creation through clear and powerful images of stunning impact. The boundaries of our thoughts are expanded to new and amazing dimensions of consciousness through our comprehension of Angelo's incredible sensitivity and artistry.

The highest exponent of the scientific world of today, Stephen Hawking, said: "Look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see, and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious." Science and art: two distinct idioms. Maristela is the bilinguist that translates the message into words that our souls can perceive as an invitation to explore.