



**Italian artist  
Pietro tells Skin  
about the beauty  
of dancing iron  
and natural decay**

Pietro knew that he was never meant to become an architect. Despite studying beyond his Bachelor's of Arts in Rome in the late 1980s, working in his beloved city to complete the usually tortuous route to professional qualification, he never believed that the strictures of building design provided the creative outlet he craved.

He abandoned his profession, but still drawing extensively on its disciplines, he developed a unique, highly personal style of mixed media collage, a process that was largely the result of extensive research and experimentation. By the mid-1990s, he was supporting himself with his art, and was able to participate in a number of high-profile exhibitions. Between 2002 and 2007, his work was included in several collaborative exhibitions in both Rome and Barcelona, each consolidating his burgeoning reputation.

Pietro was introduced to the region with a highly successful exhibition at Amman's Orfali Gallery, where his work was a part of a European Union-sponsored workshop that brought together seven artists from the EU and the Arab World to share their varied cultural experiences. With the goal of building bridges between different artistic cultures, Inaam Orfali, the director of the gallery, said that the artist's "interaction and cultural inspiration... yielded exciting visual results." Pietro worked with artists from Spain, Iraq, Jordan and Cyprus, blending his vision to theirs in an incredible show of harmony.

His technique relies on the controlled interaction of rust and a variety of materials. "Rust on canvas, cotton, wool, nylon, etc," as he explains himself. "To me, rust on canvas means the interplay and dancing of different iron plates and the saturation of their rusts with the passing of time."

He works by submerging iron plates of varying shapes and sizes in water for extended periods, frequently altering their position and direction. These are then placed on the material, creating fragmented, seemingly random expressions of space.

Critiques have described his work as beautiful, avant-garde, surreal and magnificent. One said that it was like "a metallic collection of pressed flowers", although there is little at work as ornate or fragile as nature, even if the effect is both enchanting and abstract.

Pietro believes that the beauty of the work he does is a reflection of his inner beauty as a man. "My rust is the result of much experimentation," he says, "not outside but mostly inside of my soul. I seek to explore the most natural way to express my need.

"The canvas to me is an area of potential events and endless possibilities given by fantasies and material." And what does Pietro himself think of the result of his artwork, does he achieve his purpose? "The impact of rust gives various tensions like splinters of a battle between light and pieces scattered randomly in space."

For this 40 year-old, though, rust is not a symbol of decay or finality. There are a number of further investigations into the material. "I feel I am just beginning a long journey." And we'll definitely ride along with him.

