



*Casino*, 30 x 30 in.

during this period, art remained at the heart of his projects. "I was offered a full-time post which I turned down. I didn't want to get caught-up in the system. I dropped everything to become an artist."

An audacious decision if there ever was one, he went to task in finding an expressive style that would be uniquely his. "I wasn't following a precise plan and wasn't driven by great ambition, but I had confidence that it would work." Two to three years later, his paintings start to hang on the walls of regional galleries and within a couple more years he begins traveling from one symposium to the other where he meets artists from whom he learns a great deal. After exploring numerous avenues, he quickly enough finds his trademark style: a colour, ver-

million red, which is present in each of his works, as well as faceless figures. He claims this style simply imposed itself. "I let the painting guide me. It sounds funny, but it's true. I start by playing with colours on canvas in an abstract fashion then I stand back and see what I can find in this initial sketch. That's when I start working on effects of light and shadow and the composition reveals itself to me. As to facial features, it was my decision to eliminate them to concentrate on free interpretation of emotions."

There is of course a psychological dimension to his work which is a mirror he has learned to face. Artists usually pour themselves wholeheartedly into their work; hence the creator sees himself completely bared and without pretense into the final piece. In the early

works, one figure, that of a child, is omnipresent. "The subject impelled itself. It was difficult at first to accept this reflection of myself. I didn't want to believe that I had remained at the childhood stage." Then over time the character grew, matured and welcomed multiple other characters. "I see it clearly now, my first paintings featured this sole figure that occupied the whole space and appeared to be shouting: Look at me!" This need for recognition and this urgency to take his rightful place were finally rewarded through hard work. "I believe my work has gained in complexity, my technique has improved and I now pay more attention to detail." Concerned with authenticity, he acknowledges that the hazards of life have forced him to grow and that the final result is