

FRIEZE



Work in Progress: Trey Abdella—"How can I make a painting breathe?"

We go behind the scenes with artists bringing new work to Frieze fairs. Brooklyn-based Trey Abdella talks about blending assemblage, sculpture and painting

+2

BY LIVIA RUSSELL AND TREY ABDELLA IN FRIEZE NEW YORK, INTERVIEWS | 26 APR 24



*For "Work in Progress," we speak to artists who are bringing their latest work to Frieze fairs to check in on their process. Ahead of his inclusion in David Lewis's presentation at **Frieze New York**, Trey Abdella discusses his experiments with the interactive potential of painting that are driving his most ambitious work to date.*

Livia Russell How is your practice currently evolving?

Trey Abdella My work is steeped in experimentation and play. I've always had an interest in surface and materiality. Lately, I've been trying to merge ways of making, including assemblage, sculpture and painting. Function and interaction are becoming increasingly important to the work. How can I make a painting breathe, a mosquito pump blood, or a snowglobe shake? These ideas are puzzles I have to solve: how to embed motors, hologram fans or pump systems in order to create a more reactive painting.



Trey Abdella's studio. Courtesy of the artist and David Lewis

LR Where does the work you will be presenting at Frieze New York fit within this evolution?

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LR Are there any new sources of inspiration that are guiding your current work?

TA I love pillaging junk stores, visiting amusement parks and traveling to eccentric spaces. Recently, I visited the Bronx Zoo and I haven't been able to get the merry-go-round of giant insects out of my head.



Bronx Zoo. Courtesy of the artist and David Lewis

LR Which part of your process are you devoting time to in the studio right now?

TA Right now I'm planning and mode-sketching ideas, letting them stew to see which ones are worth making. A lot of planning, research and tinkering.

My work is steeped in experimentation and play.

LR How is presenting new work at a fair different to a gallery show?

TA I think showing at a gallery is akin to going to a birthday party, while showing at a fair is more like attending Coachella.



Trey Abdella's studio. Courtesy of the artist and David Lewis