

j o s h u a  
a b e l o w

Magenta Plains is pleased to present *Leaky Abstractions*, a series of new oil on linen paintings by New York artist Joshua Abelow. Abelow works in several mediums including painting and drawing, photography and poetry. Abelow is also known as an actively engaged artist curator with a long history of supporting and exhibiting under recognized artists.

Abelow's work explores the psychology and psychosis of the Artist through abstraction. For his new series of paintings, Abelow draws parallels between meaning and making with managing and processing information. *Leaky Abstractions* is a term popularized by software engineer Joel Spolsky in 2002. According to Spolsky, we encounter "leaky abstractions" whenever we use our computers and smartphones. In the simplest terms, he is referring to the ways in which user-friendly icons conceal complicated networks of software code that can and do fail. Information that leaks is no longer useful in computer science, but can be generative within an art-making process. In the context of Abelow's new paintings, the term is descriptive: abstract paintings appear to be leaking, melting, or glitching, as if infected with a computer virus. Abelow is acutely aware of his work's relationship to technology as the steward of his artistic documentation into the future—his paintings living on as jpeg consumables.

The *Leaky Abstractions* begin with gridded underpainting that provides a structure on top of which Abelow is free to conduct various disruptions to the logic of pure abstraction. Conceptually, the grids relate to power infrastructures both mechanical and social, as well as the ways we are connected and controlled by forces the eye can't see. Connectivity metaphors such as circuit boards, building blocks, and manipulation of information within the computer science realm relate to the artist's struggle to compute through paint, and the inevitably difficult task of inserting oneself into a particular art-historical moment. When considering the history of painting, artists such as Hans Hoffman, Stanley Whitney, Blinky Palermo, Mary Heilman, Piet Mondrian, Thornton Willis, Stewart Hitch, Ulla Wiggen, and Peter Halley come to mind as painters who Abelow relates to either formally or conceptually.

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may 29—july 3, 2021



Joshua Abelow (b. 1976, Frederick, MD) earned his MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in 2008 and his BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1998. Recent exhibitions were held at Sydney, Sydney, AU; Apartment 13, Providence, RI; Cooper Cole, Toronto, CA; James Fuentes, New York, NY; Halsey McKay, East Hampton, NY; Tif Sigfrids, Los Angeles, CA; Nina Johnson, Miami, FL; Bodega, New York, NY; Real Pain, Los Angeles, CA; and Et al. San Francisco, CA. Abelow's work has been included in numerous group exhibitions internationally. The artist has several published books including *Painter's Journal* (2012), *ART FICTION* (2013), *DRAWINGS DRAWINGS* (2018), and *Good Morning* (2018). From 2010 to 2015, Abelow ran ART BLOG ART BLOG, which functioned as an art blog, temporary gallery, print publication, and sculpture. Additionally, the artist is known as the proprietor of Freddy, a curatorial project he founded in Baltimore (2014). Abelow lives and works in Harris, NY and New York, NY. He will mount a solo exhibition at Anthony Greaney in Somerville, MA in Fall 2021.