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**“Trey Abdella’s Miserable Dream”
New Art21 Film to Premiere Online on December 10, 2025**

Strolling the boardwalks of Coney Island, artist Trey Abdella gets inspiration from the camp, craft, and engineering hidden within the rides and attractions, discovering surprising new strategies for painting.



Production stills from the Art21 *New York Close Up* film “Trey Abdella’s Miserable Dream.” © Art21, Inc. 2025.

[Watch the trailer](#)

New York, New York—December 8, 2025—Art21 today announced the release of “Trey Abdella’s Miserable Dream,” a new documentary film following the artist as he mines the everyday aesthetics of middle-class America—from “Live Laugh Love” and kitschy home decor to Saturday morning cartoons and amusement park animatronics—peeling back their artifice to reveal the oddities, dysfunction, and disgust that may lie underneath. Abdella’s approach to painting is expansive, embracing materials like pearlescent pigment, glitter, sticks and stones,

broken ceramic figurines, servo motors, and holographic fans in works that cannot be contained within a single medium.

Directed by Oscar-shortlisted filmmaker Andrew Nadkarni, the film premieres online Wednesday, December 10, at 12 pm ET on Art21.org and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...).

As the leading independent producer documenting the art of our time, Art21 was established with a mission to expand access to artists and their ideas, meet audiences where they are, and explore connections between artists and their communities. To date, Art21 has created 80+ hours of films documenting over 300 artists across six continents.

As he completes a new work from his Brooklyn studio, Trey Abdella draws upon the wide variety of resources, techniques, and collections he's amassed, pairing highly skilled representational painting with handicraft and play to create his singular visions of the American Dream and its shortcomings.

"When I'm thinking about work, I really think about balance, like looking for this duality that's kind of sweet and disgusting," says the artist.

"The first idea Trey and I had was to film on the Spook-A-Rama ride at Coney Island. It felt like the perfect way to get inside his mind—surrounded by a cacophony of laughter, screaming, and illusion," says the director, Andrea Nadkarni. "I wanted the viewer to be propelled through Trey's world of wide-ranging inspirations, dropping into rabbit holes that lead to unexpected emotional depths."

About *New York Close Up*

New York Close Up (NYCU) is devoted to capturing early career artists living and working in New York City. NYCU films have been accepted and honored by over 100 film festivals worldwide, including Academy Awards-qualifying festivals like AmDocs Film Festival, Big Sky Documentary Film Festival, BlackStar, DOC NYC, Full Frame Documentary Film Festival and Palm Springs ShortFest. NYCU films have also been honored with 2 Webby Award nominations and 9 Vimeo Staff Picks.

New York Close Up is made possible with support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, the Henry Nias Foundation, and individual contributors.



About Art21

Art21 documents the art of our time through the words and works of the most impactful artists working today. Operating at the nexus of contemporary art and film, Art21 produces intimate portraits of artists at crucial moments of creation, inviting audiences to see the world from an artist's perspective. From its award-winning public television series to in-person public programs, education initiatives, and film screenings, to broadcasting documentary films free, online, and across social media platforms, the independent nonprofit is dedicated to meeting audiences where they are and to making contemporary art accessible to all. For more information, visit Art21.org.

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For an advance screening or to learn more, email Art21 Associate Director of Communications, Hannah DeGarmo, at hannah@art21.org.

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