

Freeman, Nate, "Studio Visit: Artist David Altmejd on Cleaning His Studio for a Fresh Start and the Powerful Spiritual Teachings of Eckhart Tolle," *Artnet.com*, September 25, 2020

artnet

Studio Visit: Artist David Altmejd on Cleaning His Studio for a Fresh Start and the Powerful Spiritual Teachings of Eckhart Tolle

The artist tells us about how he stays sane during long stretches in the studio.

Nate Freeman | September 25, 2020



David Altmejd. Photo courtesy David Kordansky Gallery.

Many artists kept busy during quarantine, but it seems like the Los Angeles-based sculptor David Altmejd was especially tied up.

Holed up in his studio in L.A., Altmejd put the finishing touches on works for a show at his Brussels gallery, Xavier Hufkens, that opened earlier this month. And in August, word got out that he was joining the roster at powerhouse Los Angeles outfit David Kordansky Gallery, which promptly gave him an online show dedicated to a single new work. Altmejd's first show in the physical gallery space is slated for May 2021.

In the days before the show in Brussels opened, Altmejd emailed us some thoughts about how he stays sane during long stretches in the studio, and what he would put on his moodboard if he had one.

What are the most indispensable items in your studio and why?

Quartz, [an] open mind, pencil/paper, space to cry.

What is the studio task on your agenda tomorrow that you are most looking forward to?

I just finished a piece, so cleaning up and emptying the space for fresh new start.

What kind of atmosphere do you prefer when you work? Do you listen to music or podcasts, or do you prefer silence? Why?

I listen to Eckhart Tolle's *The Power of Now* audiobook on repeat. It's my bible. It's not so much about the content, but the fact that it opens up a space in consciousness, outside of time, and so most of what happens in the studio comes from this space (or non-space) rather than from me.

Freeman, Nate, "Studio Visit: Artist David Altmejd on Cleaning His Studio for a Fresh Start and the Powerful Spiritual Teachings of Eckhart Tolle," *Artnet.com*, September 25, 2020



David Altmejd, *Joy*. Photo courtesy Xavier Hufkens.



David Altmejd, *Codebreaker* (2020). Photo courtesy White Cube.

When I work late at night, I try to open up a scary zone, an ominous space, where spirits awake and where intensity grows exponentially. It feels like something so immense is about to happen, like the end of the world, death, or a complete transformation of consciousness. At that moment, I stop working because I'm too scared. This unreachable sweet spot is God.

What trait do you most admire in a work of art? What trait do you most despise?

When I'm mesmerized and I don't know why. It means that there's something in the work that comes from beyond the mind. Or rather, when a work of art is not made up completely of mind-stuff, so it leaves openings and the other side, which can not be described, and can be felt.

And I don't despise anything in art.

What snack food could your studio not function without?

I take care of a little vegetable garden just outside my studio, so anything ripe is a perfect snack. Recently it's been raw okra and tomatoes.

Who are your favorite artists, curators, or other thinkers to follow on social media?

Mu Pan (@mupan1911), Sgàire Teàrlag Wood (@sgairewood), Alina Perez (@alina.perez).

When you feel stuck in the studio, what do you do to get un-stuck?

Nothing.

If you had to put together a mood board, what would be on it right now?

World in flames, beautiful jack rabbit, marijuana, woman giving birth.