



MAN IN MOTION
Egan's "Identity and Purpose" and, at far left, "Shadow Sister"

Strife in the Fast Lane

Trading troubled youth in small-town Kansas for the Texas art whirl, Trey Egan's buzzed-about blurs bound into Houston. | By Sara Cress |

Like his life story, Trey Egan's art is about moving. Moving fast.

The Denton, Texas-based artist—whose abstract oil paintings that recall the effects of rapid spinning are on display for the first time in H-Town at McMurtrey Gallery (3508 Lake St., 713.523.8238) through Aug. 11—grew up a “pretty damn good” track runner in Salina, Kan. (population: small), and he ran track in college. But having developed a strong interest in art as a child, however, his real desire was to be in the art world—which wasn't going to happen if he stayed in Kansas.

“There isn't a lot of art in Salina; there are a lot of drugs and trouble,” says Egan, 33, speaking of his own distractions. “Tons of avenues into bad situations, and I took many of those avenues. I needed a clean break from everything I grew up around.”

He's reluctant to discuss specifics, but he says that having

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gotten into lots of trouble when he was younger, and having found his way out of it, helped make him a tough and determined artist. “When I need to access the sheer will to produce,” he says, “all I have to do is remind myself of what I've already made it through. Every other obstacle seems simple in comparison.”

Egan, after stints at Kansas State University and Saddleback College in California, eventually found his way to the University of North Texas in 2006, where he's pursuing a master's degree under the tutelage of Robert Jessup, a perennial favorite in the Houston art scene. And now into that very scene comes Egan, with his mad-mess-of-color, large-scale canvases that seem as if they were created on a speeding merry-go-round. “When you're driving down the road, in your periphery you see all sorts of shapes and colors passing,” he explains, “but they're out of focus and they represent things. They're just organic abstractions. That's what I compare my work to.”

Egan's McMurtrey show, *Systematic Motion*, is a nod to his painting process. “It's systematic in that I know what I'm doing,” he says, “but I'm moving faster than I can think, purposefully. I feel like, if I am thinking while I'm making these motions, that they're not going to have a soul otherwise.”

Nowadays his life is fairly low-key. He got married in the Bahamas last month, and has few hobbies besides following college basketball and hanging with his new wife Amanda. Slow, for him. But when he gets into the studio, the pace picks up. Egan even listens to progressive trance, a type of high-energy electronic dance music, while working. “The beats and hypnotizing melodies of trance allow me to access a zone that is more private, secluded from the negativity and stresses of life.”

In addition to *Motion* and an upcoming show in Dallas, Egan's work has also been catching the eyes of top interior designers. Which suits him just fine. “I'm constantly straddling the world of academia and people in the design district,” he says. “I prefer being in the middle of everything. I think that's why finding my home was a long process.”