

ABRAHAM ONKST

b. 2000, Roaring Spring, Pennsylvania · Lives and works in Altoona, Pennsylvania
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Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

- 2023 B.A., Visual Art Studies, The Pennsylvania State University, Altoona, PA
2019 Young Entrepreneurs Academy, Altoona, PA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 *Synthetic World*, Community Arts Center of Cambria County, Johnstown, PA (January–February)
2023 *STATIC!*, Sheetz Gallery, Penn State Altoona, Altoona, PA (April)
2019 *Abraham Onkst*, 321 Art Gallery, Hollidaysburg, PA (January)

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 *Our Flag in American Art (1935–2026)*, traveling exhibition: Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL; Museum of Art – DeLand, DeLand, FL (June 19–August 16); Polk State College Gallery, FL (forthcoming)
2026 *What We Keep*, The Cronin Gallery + Trimper Gallery, Upstate Art Weekend, New Paltz, NY (June 25–29)
2026 Trimper Gallery, Greenwich, CT — featured works (February)
2025 *Art Alumni Exhibition*, Misciagna Family Center for Performing Arts Gallery, Penn State Altoona, Altoona, PA (July–September)
2024 ZeArts Worldwide Galleries — featured works (June)
2023 Kodner Galleries, Dania Beach, FL — consigned works presented (December)
2023 *Anything Goes*, California Heritage Museum, Santa Monica, CA (September)
2023 Corridor Contemporary, Philadelphia, PA — featured works (March)
2023 *Biennial*, Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art, Loretto, PA (February–April)
2022 *Day One's*, 1CULTURE Gallery, San Jose, CA (August)
2022 *Workout*, McLanahan Gallery, Penn State Altoona, Altoona, PA (April)
2021 Group Exhibition, Corridor Contemporary, Philadelphia, PA (August)
2021 Group Exhibition, Erick Vilches Gallery, Fort Lauderdale, FL (June)
2021 *Lit* (pop-up exhibition), Penn State Altoona, Altoona, PA (March)
2020 Splendid Society Art & Fashion Pop-Up, Hadleys, Altoona, PA (November)
2019 El Paso Fashion Week, Grace Gardens Event Center, El Paso, TX (October)

- 2018 *Distinctly Complimentary* (two-person, with Andrew Sensenig), The Living Gallery Outpost, New York, NY (May)
- 2018 Ebensburg Art in Bloom, Ebensburg Courthouse, Ebensburg, PA (April)

PUBLIC WORKS

- 2026 *United We Stand (Expanded)*, mural, 1332 11th Avenue, Altoona, PA — commissioned through Arts Altoona (June)

AWARDS

- 2021–23 Borland Scholarship, The Pennsylvania State University
- 2023 Craft It, Pitch It, Win It — The Pennsylvania State University
- 2019 Most Outstanding Business Award, Young Entrepreneurs Academy investor panel, Altoona, PA
- 2018 Best of Show, Ebensburg Art in Bloom, Ebensburg, PA

PRESS & PUBLICATIONS

- 2026 “Holidaysburg grad chosen to display artwork in Florida museum,” *Altoona Mirror*, June 2026
- 2023 “Five Questions with Abraham Onkst,” *New & Abstract* (Germany), 2023
- 2022– Jacob Johnson, featured artwork, My Art Is Real, 2022–present
- 2022 KC O’Day, “Artist Spotlight: Abraham Onkst,” ABC23 (WATM-TV), broadcast interview, March 2022
- 2021 “INSIGHT: Imagined Future,” *FOKUS Magazine*, pp. 60–61, June 2021
- 2021 *Hard Freight Art and Literary Magazine*, Penn State Altoona (Lakeside, Confidence, Solace) (April)
- 2020 *Splendid Society Magazine*, Issue 1 — featured art, writings, and photography (December)
- 2020 *Zine OnUs*, Issue 2: CHAOS — featured work (October)
- 2019 Joe Glass, artist mini-documentary, The Grey Medium, Bedford, PA, February 2019
- 2019 Tony DeGol, “Teen’s Mission to Create Beauty Leads to Vibrant Art Company,” Arts Altoona, April 2019
- 2019 *Genre: Urban Arts*, Nos. 5 & 6, cover artist, Milwaukee, WI (February)
- 2018 Kendyl Ramsey, “Artist to Artist: Abraham Onkst,” Arts Altoona, February 2018

PHILANTHROPY

- 2024 Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art, fundraising event and silent auction, Ligonier, PA (September)

- 2023 Mount Aloysius College, fundraising event and silent auction, Cresson, PA (October)
- 2023 Cookies for Kids' Cancer, art auction gala, New York, NY (October)
- 2022 Cookies for Kids' Cancer, Art in August limited-edition plate sale (October)
- 2019 Cookies for Kids' Cancer, art auction gala, New York, NY (March)
- 2017-18 Sideline Cancer Foundation, artwork donations, Hollidaysburg, PA
- 2018 The Angels Foundation, silent-auction artwork donation, Hollidaysburg, PA

SELECTED PROJECTS & COLLABORATIONS

- 2021-22 Del Toro × Abraham Onkst pocket-square collaboration, Carlstadt, NJ — product design and photography
- 2020 *Pluko, Colorblind* album film, Proximity (YouTube) — creative direction, filming, editing, set design

GALLERIES

Trimper Gallery, Greenwich, CT · Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL

ABRAHAM ONKST

Artist Statement

My paintings begin as accumulations. Brush-drawn line, washes of color, splatters and drips, handwriting set down and struck through, whole passages covered and rebuilt — each mark answers the one before it, and the composition surfaces slowly through that exchange. I work until the canvas holds more history than any single gesture could carry, then stop while that history is still visible.

The work is made in the earliest hours of the morning, most often beginning at 4:30 AM, when the world is still and attention is undivided. In that quiet, the paintings often feel received as much as made — as though each one were a fragment of an origin story from a world beyond this one. Expression and channeling operate together: I am rendering my own experience while listening for something beyond it.

The work extends the lineage of American gestural abstraction — its conviction that the act of painting can register thought and feeling directly — while drawing equally on the vernacular energy of graffiti: writing as image, the surface as a site claimed and reclaimed by many passes of the hand. I find particular kinship in Cy Twombly's scrawled, cancelled, and rewritten lines, where language breaks down into pure mark. Between the singular heroic gesture of Abstract Expressionism and the street's culture of overwriting, my paintings stake out a middle ground: one hand, returning again and again, layering itself over time.

Material behavior drives the work. I paint primarily in acrylic across its full range of viscosities — fluid, heavy body, mediums, varnish — alongside oil stick, ink, pencil, and marker, attending to how paint moves, resists, stains, conceals, and reveals. Canvas is my primary support, though I also paint on found wood whose sculptural weight pushes back against the image. The finished surfaces keep the evidence of their making: revision, risk, and persistence held in suspension.

Underneath the process is a preoccupation with the way experience accumulates in layers. Memories stack; joy, pain, tension, and wonder occupy the same ground at once — a condition only intensified by the saturated, always-on image environment of contemporary life. The paintings absorb that density but answer it in physical terms: the weight of paint, the resistance of a surface, and the record of the hand working in real time. Abstraction lets me build spaces where that simultaneity becomes visible — atmospheres and fields where accumulated feeling collides, settles, and releases. After thirteen years of sustained practice, the paintings remain a negotiation between forethought and instinct, carried out one mark at a time.