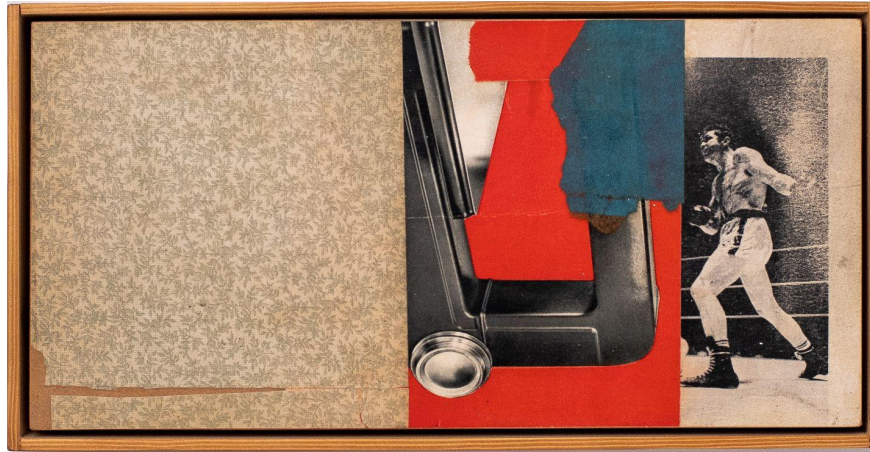


**Mac Premo**  
*I'm Usually Pretty Good At Naming Things*

**March 25 - April 23, 2023**



**Opening Day Program**

Saturday, March 25

**Artist Talk: Mac Premo & Jad Abumrad**

4 - 5 pm

Coolidge Corner Theater, 290 Harvard  
Street, Brookline, MA 02446

Registration required

**Opening Reception**

5 - 7 pm

Praise Shadows Art Gallery  
313A Harvard Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(March 5, 2023 – Brookline, MA) Praise Shadows is pleased to announce the next exhibition, *I'm Usually Pretty Good At Naming Things* by the Brooklyn-based artist Mac Premo, on view March 25 through April 23. An opening day Artist Talk between Premo and Jad Abumrad, the American radio host and founder of the podcast Radiolab, will take place at the Coolidge Corner Theater on March 25 at 4 pm. The event is free, but advanced registration is required via this link. Seating is limited. The general public is welcome to join the Opening Reception immediately following the talk.

We are honored to share the artist's exhibition statement:

A few years ago, I noticed that my art and commercial practices were beginning to converge. The process by which I was creating art began to take on some of the pre-planning inherent to commercial production. At the same time, I was watching artists my age become successful in the art world. Some of that art world success

looked to me a lot like the convergence I was suspicious of in my own practice. Is this the future of an aging artist? Does planning supplant discovery?

Then two things happened: I spoke with Tom Mills; and I stood in front of an Ellsworth Kelly painting.

Thomas Lyon Mills is my mentor, my drawing teacher from college. His work is painstakingly steeped in craft, yet driven almost exclusively by reaction to form. In speaking with him, he expressed how utterly imperative it was for an artist to be able to listen to his work. The work must have a voice of its own. How, I thought, could my work speak to me if I was telling it what to say?

Then one day I found myself at the Whitney in front of Ellsworth Kelly's Red, White and Blue. I had seen Kelly's work a hundred times before, but something new happened to me on that day. I became transfixed, inebriated with a poetry I can only liken to the first time I heard The Clash. For a good minute, Red, White and Blue was speaking to me and me alone. And then, as if a gift from the gods, a cargo-short wearing dad sidled up next to me, and offered up his confoundment in what I imagine to be an act of camaraderie: "My kid could paint that," he confided. Art's voice doesn't sound the same to everyone. I saw a piece that spoke to me. It did not speak to him, and I did not care. I decided then that I wanted my art to speak to me, and speak to people who are important to me.

Joe Strummer of The Clash said it best: "All we're doing is trying to communicate something. Sometimes we know what it is, sometimes we don't".

In the summer of 2022, I decided that I had spent long enough making art with pre-ordained meaning. I wanted to see what art-making was like free from that obligation. I wanted to see what would happen if I let the process speak back to me. So I culled through my extensive arsenal of the stuff I make collage and sculpture with, and made a stack of paper about a foot tall. With this as my raw material, I cast aside the idea of outward expression with a specific agenda, and embraced inward exploration with unassigned curiosity.

Subsequently, each collage became its own independent narrative. I was speaking in an intuitive language that perhaps I didn't have total agency over. It was scary, and it was freeing.

I knew that even if I didn't fully understand what I was making, there would be two people who would: my kids. To be clear, I don't mean 'understand' in the way one processes a distinct language: I'm not a semaphore; they are not at sea. What I mean is that these pieces might just have a poetic resonance with the two people who know me better than I know myself.

Maybe by admitting that I don't have all the answers—not by a long shot—in a communication authored for the people who ostensibly look to me for answers, I can become as cool as Joe Strummer. At least to my kids.

**About the artist**

Mac Premo makes art, commercials and short films. Born in Washington, DC in 1973, Mac graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1995 and moved to New York that same year. His films and art have exhibited worldwide, including the Ringling Museum, PS1 MoMA and The Brooklyn Museum. Mac has won 13 New York Emmy® Awards for his video and animation work, including awards for best commercial, photography, set design and best PSA. Sometimes he writes and performs one-man plays. Mac is a NYFA Fellow and is based in Brooklyn, NY.

**About Praise Shadows Art Gallery**

Established in 2020, Praise Shadows Art Gallery is a commercial gallery space in the Boston area showing the work of emerging and mid-career artists. We believe that the art ecosystem is filled with untapped potential, and our work is grounded by partnering closely with artists to develop opportunities in emerging models of creativity and entrepreneurship — exhibitions, commissions, brand partnerships, new technologies, and original concepts that no one has ever tried before. Praise Shadows Art Partners advises artists and companies in the creative industries on strategic partnerships and marketing. Our work is local, global, and virtual.

[www.praiseshadows.com](http://www.praiseshadows.com)

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PRESS CONTACT:

[gallery@praiseshadows.com](mailto:gallery@praiseshadows.com)

Mac Premo

*I Must Not Fight My Inner Motherwell*

2022

Mixed media collage, wood frame

5" x 9" x 1 7/8"

Image courtesy of the artist and Praise Shadows Art Gallery