

Art Now LA, August 6, 2026

Alex Hubbard: 'Abstract or Regular'
Metaphors Versus Representations
Regen Projects
July 11 - August 15, 2026

by Jody Zellen



Alex Hubbard is best known for bold abstract paintings made from a variety of traditional (oil/acrylic paint) and more experimental materials (urethane, resin, and fiberglass). To create these works, Hubbard often takes in his surroundings, distills his observations of the natural world and built environments before transforming his impressions into abstractions.

Hubbard has included video alongside paintings in previous his exhibitions, but this presentation favors video sculptures. On view is only a single, modest sized painting, hung on the entry wall outside the main space. Titled *Bone Orchard* (all works 2026), it is an abstract composition with objects scattered across the foreground in front of a large white shape — akin to an animal torso. It's surrounded by plant fragments and other utilitarian objects that are difficult to identify. The ambiguity of the image is both intriguing and unsettling. The painting functions as a strange introduction to what is installed in the darkened interior space, hidden behind black curtains. Here, one encounters six wooden structures each supporting a projection mapped animation.

"Wow" is the word that first comes to mind upon entering the main gallery, followed by, "*this is quite a surprise.*" Strategically placed around the room are six larger than life-sized sculptures each supporting a looping animation (from a nearby projector) that not only fills the odd cut-out shapes, but, in some instances, also spills onto the floor and walls. The imagery is quirky and nonsensical, ranging from circling snakes to a billowing tent surrounded by googling eyes to a hippo's head to a spinning wheel, as well as an oil can that supports a huge, illuminated pickle and smoking cigarette.

In *Snake Island*, multi-colored brightly patterned snakes circle upon each other following the motion of a Mobius strip, mouths infinitely swallowing each other's tails. For *Self Portrait*, Hubbard depicts himself as a cartoony white larva/worm with bulging yellow blinking eyes and a long pink tongue that sags onto the floor. The giant blue hippo (or dinosaur) head in *Incubus* sheds tears from a closed eye while its blue tongue wavers in an ungainly mouth held open by a bright red stick. The creature appears anguished and

helpless, a departure from traditional/popular commercial animations.

Somniloquy is the medical term for talking unaware in one's sleep — and in Hubbard's like-named animation, a light blue tent held in place by red pegs undulates in the dark. Expanding and contracting like lungs filling with air, a rounded blue shape appears on the wall behind it while hidden 'ghosts' with googly eyes around it are caught off guard. Hubbard's tent is presented as an uninviting place to camp. The colorful array of projected imagery embraces technology while still being relatively low-tech. It is both serious and ironic: exact, yet also off. A celebration of the hand made in an age of AI perfection.

Looking more closely at the animations, one is drawn to their inexactness and funkiness, prompting questions about intentionality. Does the fact that the projections are slightly out of focus and spill over the edges of their supports add or detract from the presentation? Titled *Abstract or Regular?*, the exhibition poses questions that it does not answer. An 'abstract' is a summary and a concept that may only exist in the mind. It also refers to non-representational artworks. 'Regular' is that which is normal or usual: it is the most common type of gasoline. Pondering how much these pieces resonate conceptually, technically and artistically, Hubbard lets his viewers decide to what extent the works are metaphors versus representations.

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