

# Rob Pruitt

## Holiday

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*“Rob Pruitt is like a shiny steel ball in a pinball game bouncing off the rubber at a fast pace going from idea to idea creating high-scoring art that playfully reflects America’s cultural landscape and injects visual energy into the art world”*

-Vincent Fremont

**MASSIMODECARLO is delighted to present *Holiday*, a solo exhibition by American artist Rob Pruitt. In *Holiday*, Pruitt reimagines societal conventions of popular culture - toy pandas, romantic views, sunsets, even daily rituals practised before the bathroom mirror - elevating them to the status of contemporary talismans.**

The exhibition unfolds like a meditation on life’s rhythms - both the grand cosmic cycles and the deeply personal ones. Spanning themes of time, memory, identity, and the peculiar poetry of everyday objects, the works are as introspective as they are universal.

In *Holiday*, a suite of 24 paintings marks the passage of a single day, capturing the subtle drama of light as it shifts throughout time. Drawing from photos taken on his iPhone and employing meticulous colour blending, Pruitt channels the sequential motion of British photographer Eadweard Muybridge, but replaces the iconic galloping horses with the quieter unfolding of a day. The result is both meditative and cinematic - a visual reel of shifting hues that encourages viewers to pause and reflect on how our days, the fundamental units of our existence, often slip into the background of our lives. As Pruitt describes it, these works are “containers,” open to whatever we choose to project onto them, transforming the ordinary into an ever-evolving canvas of meaning.

Alongside Pruitt’s Sunset Paintings, another series inspired by the phases of the moon takes a more leisurely approach to time. Here, hours are replaced by the unhurried passage of months. The paintings depict nocturnal skies framed by palm trees, inviting a contemplative exploration of time’s cyclical nature. These works oscillate between the grandiosity of the cosmos and the intimate calm of a tropical vacation. Much like the works featuring shades and sea horizons, they encourage us to peek through a

window - not so much to observe the moon, but to experience those rare moments when its quiet presence briefly halts the usual rush of our daily lives.

Also present in *Holiday* are Pruitt’s iconic panda creatures that have come to symbolise more than just cuteness. In Pruitt’s hands, the panda embodies fragility, resilience, and our own cultural projections. Through this figure, Pruitt invites us to reflect on our complex relationship with nature, offering a metaphor for the delicate line between what we cherish and what we risk losing. For this showcase, the panda takes on a three-dimensional form, handcrafted by Gufram, the Italian radical design brand, and reimagined as a manger centrepiece. Less a provocation and more a playful-yet-sobering reflection, it casts wildlife in the sacrificial role we so often demand of it.

In *Bathroom Mirrors*, Pruitt turns his gaze inward, exploring identity through a literal reflection on life’s stages. These works transform a mundane household fixture - both mirrors and accompanying shelves - into a vehicle for autobiographical storytelling. Each mirror is anchored by a different life phase and populated by objects both iconic and personal - the artist’s used toothbrushes, a plastic bracelet gifted from Karen Kilimnik, a handful of political pins, and a condom packet. Through these assemblages, Pruitt reveals the evolution of identity - not just his, but ours as well. It’s an unexpectedly tender reflection on how we curate our lives through the small, meaningful tokens we gather along the way.

In typical Pruitt fashion, *Holiday* balances awe with humour, intimacy with spectacle. It’s a celebration of life’s cycles - day to night, moonrise to moonset, childhood to midlife - and a reminder to look up, look around, and maybe even look in the mirror.

Kicking off *Holiday* and its opening on December 12th, Pruitt’s legendary flea market will make its return. For over 15 years, Pruitt has been hosting these unconventional bazaars, appearing everywhere from New York to Venice. A blend of high and low culture, these markets are less about shopping and more about celebrating community and creativity. This year’s edition, with all proceeds going to the Cuore21 Charity, features works by renowned

international artists and invites you to rethink what a flea market can be while enjoying it for what you already know and expect it to be.

### **Rob Pruitt**

Rob Pruitt was born in Washington D.C. in 1964 and studied at the Corcoran College of Art and Design in Washington D.C. and Parsons School of Design in New York. He lives and works in New York.

Since the early 1990s, Rob Pruitt's risk-taking investigations into American popular culture have taken many forms. From his notorious Cocaine Buffet (1998) and glitter portraits of Pandas or the significant Suicide Paintings series, Pruitt's works are a surreal and extravagant interpretation of the pop world, a kaleidoscopic look towards mass culture by exploring the multiple aspects and the paradoxes of our present time.

Throughout his career, Rob Pruitt has fine-tuned his ability to express nuanced ideas about culture and society through the re-interpretation of common objects and materials, all filtered through a sense of humour and irony. With his Mask series, the artist continues his pursuit of depicting the complexities of personality and emotions. The facial gestures indeed are cut into the canvas with a razor - destructive and creative at the same time, these gestures are married to an accumulation of gradients, patterns, and prints to create a character.