

# Ready-Mixed Murals

Turning concrete mixer trucks into swirling, spiraling works of art

I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE SOMETHING... really big. And iridescent. And concrete-spattered.

We're playing I Spy the Mural Cement Truck. There are a handful to spot: hot neon leopard print, African kente cloth, and paper clip-patterned. United Transit Mix's 30,000-pound turning, churning art galleries—sprayed and rolled with bright murals by artist Andrea Bergart (CFA'08) last year—are a kaleidoscopic spiral against the cement grays and muted steel reds of New York's construction sites.

The company does a "lot of high-rise work" in Manhattan and Brooklyn, says United boss Tony Mastronardi, and the polychromatic trucks are out on the street most days. Since Bergart painted the trucks, her friends in the Big Apple have been playing I Spy the Mural Cement Truck. (If you spot one, post a pic on [www.facebook.com/BUArts](http://www.facebook.com/BUArts).)

Mastronardi has been in the construction business for 40 years and he's never seen anything like this. "The truck was

due for a paint job. She asked to do it, so I said, 'Pick a truck.' I'm open to new ideas."

But a Lisa Frank-inspired, rainbow-colored, leopard-print cement truck? "I wanted to see what I could get away with," says Bergart. "The

machinery is such a masculine thing, the construction sites are such macho places, so I wanted to see if I could get some hot pink and leopard print in there."

It started with a scale model. Bergart used a toy concrete truck to test different patterns and techniques, making short videos to see how the prints worked as moving pieces. The idea of painting the trucks had come to her out of the blue—a graffiti-streaked wall plus parked mixer trucks equaled inspiration—but she



Since graduating, Bergart has painted murals in the United States and in Africa. Next, she'll travel to South Africa to paint sailboat canvases.



SIMON BISWAS (3)

says she had also "just gotten a little bit tired of stationary images on a wall, the typical mural."

For the first two trucks, she used vinyl car magnets to make templates, sticking them on the steel drums to guide the painting. The paper clips design was more freehand: spray paint for a ghost image, brushes and rollers for the finish. The paint had to be industrial-grade, tough enough to withstand a pounding on the construction site and a daily wash-down with additive-laced water.

"On each truck, I was trying to figure out the paint that would last the longest," Bergart says. "At the same time, I accept that it's a cement truck, a piece of heavy-



SHANITA SIMS

duty machinery that's going to get dirty and beaten up and backed into things. That's part of it, too: having it decay."

Her next grand scheme involves a different kind of moving canvas: sailboat canvas. Bergart has a grant to travel to South Africa and plans to "celebrate the harbor in Cape Town" by painting a sail. "I'm reaching out to sail manufacturers and trying to figure out how to translate an image and the best technique to execute that," she says.

So, while I Spy the Mural Cement Truck is open *only* to the 60 million or so residents and visitors to New York for now, expect the global edition to start soon.—ANDREW THURSTON

**WEB EXTRA**  
Watch a video of Andrea Bergart (CFA'08) painting a cement truck at [bu.edu/bostonia](http://bu.edu/bostonia).